TELOS

Number 96 *Summer 1993*

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Telos

A Quarterly Journal of Critical Thought

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Subscription Rates

One-year Individual . . . $32.00 One-year Institutional $80.00
Two-years Individual . . . $64.00 Two-years Institutional . . .$160.00
(Foreign Subscribers, including Canadians, add 15%)

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Back Issues available: ns. 13, 17-18 20-51, 53-95 at $9.50 each ($25.00 for institutions). Foreign orders, add 15%. All payments must be in U.S. currency. Out of print issues (ns. 1-12, 14-16, 19, 52) can be obtained in microform or facsimile through University Microfilms, 300 North Zeeb Rd., Ann Arbor, MI 48106, U.S.A.

Telos number 96 corresponds to Vol. 26, No. 2. ***Telos*** is published in the Spring, Summer, Fall, and Winter by Telos Press Ltd., 431 E. 12th Street, New York, NY 10009. Second Class postage paid at New York and additional mailing offices. Postmaster please send address changes to:

Telos
431 E. 12th Street
New York, NY 10009 U.S.A.

© 1993, Telos Press Ltd.
ISSN 0090-6514

Unsolicited manuscripts will be considered only if the author provides at least three clean, finished copies conforming to the appropriate ***Telos*** style, or on Apple or IBM-compatible computer diskette. Allow at least three months for editorial evaluation. Manuscripts accepted for publication which undergo considerable editing will be sent back to authors for final approval. Rejected manuscripts will be recycled.

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Introduction

Confronted with the task of redesigning its political institutions (including its constitution), Russia today is forced to reexamine all fundamental questions concerning the nature of the state, its relation to an extremely heterogeneous society and its place in the international community — problems which, in the West, are mistakenly assumed to have been solved once and for all, even though shifting power relations and unexpected new social developments have rendered obsolete most of the standard answers long since translated into political institutions. As in the case of the rebellious English colonies in America in the late 18th century or of France shortly thereafter (or even of the Bolsheviks after the 1917 *coup d'état*), Russia has now the rare opportunity to pave the way into the 21st century by developing urgently needed new geopolitical models for the future. This, however, is not what is actually happening.

Because of the intensity of the economic crisis and the myriad of new problems brought about by the sudden disintegration of the communist system, the predominant tendency in Russia today is to uncritically deploy existing, allegedly well-tested Western solutions. Thus, as Gabor Rittersporn indicates in his reply to Victor Zaslavsky's analysis of the problems of Russia's transition to democracy, today Russians are belatedly learning to appreciate the French presidential system at a time when the French themselves are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with it. Similarly, the proposed new Russian constitution prefigures a bad imitation of US federalism, which has long since ceased to be "federal" in any meaningful sense of a voluntary aggregation of autonomous political entities and has become a practically ungovernable, unresponsive and extremely wasteful version of that same unitary European state the American federation was originally meant to transcend. This is all the more paradoxical since, ultimately, the structural dysfunctions of late 20th century American federalism are roughly the same as those responsible for the demise of the former USSR — over-administration, bad management, unaccountability, etc., which are conducive to the creation of a passive, state-dependant populace unable and unwilling to sustain the political institutions of *any* kind of well-functioning society.

While it remains unclear whether or not Russia has already become an integral part of the capitalist world system, it definitely has fallen well within its ideological hegemony. This is not altogether surprising. The collapse of the communist system has meant, first and foremost, the terminal discrediting of Marxism as a transcendental interpretative scheme to make sense of temporal events by fitting them within an all-inclusive philosophy of history. To the extent

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that Western conventional wisdom interprets the collapse of the USSR primarily as a result of growing economic and democratic deficits (i.e., lack of regulatory market mechanisms and a legitimating political consensus) rather than in terms of pervasive administrative rationality crises, the only reasonable way out of the present quandaries in Russia is seen in terms of the market and broad political democratization. This is precisely what Yeltsin proposes, even if the implementation of his program necessitates the occasional blasting of recalcitrant opponents out of the Parliament building.

Such an ambitious reform program, however, confronts almost insurmountable obstacles. The Russian government finds itself too weak to rationalize a chaotic economy beyond the lingering and increasingly obsolete state sector or the wild capitalism exploding within its ruins — the early and late versions of that Fordist model already obsolete in the West and, according to Georgi Derluguian, largely responsible for the re-tribalizaton and subsequent devastation of the social fabric in the Soviet "Southern Tier." Neither of these two dominant but dysfunctional economic sectors are likely to be replaced anytime soon by more solid alternatives unless, as Zaslavsky shows, there is a credible political stabilization. The dinosaur state sector remains essential not only to guarantee employment for large chunks of the population, but also to produce goods and services the nascent capitalism, concentrated only in areas promising fast returns and short-term commitments (because of its understandable distrust of presently fragile political arrangements), is unwilling and unable to provide. No rational Russian or foreign entrepreneur is likely to invest in capital-intensive industries where returns are only possible over a number of years unless there are very strong guarantees that the political framework will not undergo radical changes. In this sense, long-term political stability is the *sine qua non conditio* for Russia's future economic health. The inescapable conclusion remains that uncritical Westernization promising stability through junior membership in the capitalist world community is immensely better than any reactionary efforts to restore the *status quo ante* or timid attempts to patch up the neo-Stalinist command economy.

While Zaslavsky's optimistic conclusions about Russia's likelihood to become a modern industrial democracy may not be altogether warranted, he does emphasize two unintended consequences of the bureaucratic collectivism of the former USSR: the overproduction of a parasitic intelligentsia and the development of a passive, state-dependent citizenry. Split between a New Class of intellectuals, technocrats and bureaucrats incapable of dealing effectively with whatever transcends formal rationality (other than through corruption) and a passive, depoliticized and therefore easily manipulable populace unable to achieve political subjectivity, the USSR was gradually paralyzed to the point that no new rationalizing agency (such as what Derluguian and Alvin W. Gouldner before him identifies as the nascent meritocratic technical intelligentsia) could possibly save the country from eventual disintegration. In fact, as Derluguian points out, it was Andropov's attempt to carry out such a

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rationalization through his misguided draconian reforms (responsible for the rise to power of Gorbachev, Yeltsin, Shavarnadze and other major figures involved in the subsequent introduction of *glasnost*, *parestroika* and efforts at systematic democratization) which doomed the USSR long before it would have collapsed otherwise. The system disintegrated in the Soviet Southern Tier as a result of the tribalization resuscitated as the most readily available defense against the devastating disruptions brought about by these authoritarian efforts to modernize the region. In retrospect, as Derluguian implies, it is becoming increasingly clear that the main substantial difference between bureaucratic collectivism in the USSR and bureaucratic liberalism in the West is that the latter has not as yet destroyed essential mediating social institutions, thus retarding the same kind of social disintegration brought about by the Soviet New Class.

As an extention of the perverse logic of New Class domination, efforts at rationalization usually have the counterproductive consequence of compounding problems they seek to resolve. The dynamics of the demise of the Soviet Southern Tier are structurally isomorphic to the precipitous decline of US higher education as a result of the introduction of state-mandated affirmative action, multiculturalism and other measures to rationalize traditional clientelism, nepotism and intellectual corruption in general. The unexpected results have been equally devastating: lower academic standards, the collapse of meritocracy and the explosion of scores of pseudo-disciplines whose main function is to provide employment to members of designated "minorities." At any rate, despite their obvious differences, what Derluguian describes as the logic of late neo-Stalinism and that of late liberalism do exhibit considerable similarities. Consequently, the simple displacement of the former by the latter may not be sufficient to bring about the qualitative changes Russian society desperately needs before it can develop into a stable, well-functioning federation.

Reconfigured as a dogmatic rights-based religion, today's liberalism seeks to homogenize every domain of life according to the abstract mandates of Enlightenment ideology — something not altogether different from communist efforts to create the new "Soviet man." The counterproductive results of this identity logic are increasing irrationality, inefficiency, crime and other pathological expressions occurring when that otherness forcibly repressed by the domination of the concept resurfaces in different guises. Already crime levels in Moscow are beginning to approach those of New York and Washington, while the new governments within the relatively autonomous republics are as unmanageable as the welfare systems of most American states. Similarly, while there can be no serious comparison between the late neo-Stalinist practice of appointing the political elite from the top down and modern *representative* democracy (notwithstanding the latter's propensity to privilege organized pressure groups and dominant economic interests), both tend to exclude public participation, with the latter leaving the majority of citizens with vacuous choices among practically identical candidates for political office. The federalism originally theorized to guarantee, among other things, a cultural particularity

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within which individuals can participate as total subjects rather than as mere fragmented citizens and thus articulate their concrete interests and needs through cultural institutions — a framework devised specifically as a political answer to the forcible homogenization entailed by liberal ideology — has unfortunately long since been displaced in the US by a post-Civil War aberration straitjacketing local autonomy into an administrative compartmentalization entrusted primarily with the rationalization and implementation of policy decisions made by the central apparatus.

In the present exceptional historical context the Russian authors of the proposed constitution could have taken these problems more seriously and attempted to institutionalize possible remedies in proposing a document more responsive to local particularity and regional autonomy — something which in all probability will be forced upon the imperial center by strong regional interests unwilling to accept another version of Moscow's traditional hegemony. Instead, the proposed constitution prefigures the development of a highly centralized state, federal in name only and far too continuous with the logic of the communist system it is meant to replace. This may be due not only to an unavoidable continuity with the past but, more importantly, to formally unacknowledged concessions to the loudly articulated concerns of the new internal opposition. This is why it is crucial to understand the real political agenda of the motley new "red-brown" opposition. As Nikolai-Klaus von Kreitor shows in his description of one of this opposition's most sophisticated theoretical organs, *Elementy*, this heterogeneous aggregation of nationalists, ex-communists and various other dissidents strongly advocates recycling some version of the old hypercentralized Soviet apparatus while uncritically buying into a geopolitical vision practically identical to that of the virulently anti-American Western Left, according to which the US is the world's *fons et origo malorum* aiming at world domination at the expense of all other countries.

By instrumentalizing and distorting some of Carl Schmitt's ideas concerning geopolitics in an international context characterized by the weakening of existing states (e.g., the notion of *Grossräume* which presupposes pluralism thus ruling out world domination by any one country) and by misreading former President Bush's careless pronouncements about "The New World Order," the editors of *Elementy* propose the development of a "*mitteleuropäische*" alliance headed by Germany and Russia to oppose US hegemonic aspirations. Predicated on a greatly inflated evaluation of Russia's military capabilities (not to mention Germany's alleged propensity to join Russia in any kind of anti-US alliance) and the likelihood of developing a "lean and mean" post-Fordist economy without massive privatization and modernization (impossible without Western technology and capital), this fantastic scenario has no chance of realizing any of his visions. It does, however, have considerable popular appeal, sufficient enough to translate into political power and thus create major obstacles to any kind of badly needed but also extremely painful and costly social and economic rationalization. Contrary to the panglossian pronouncements

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of Western liberals, in the present Russian context democratization and marketization tend to contradict each other. As already discussed in an earlier symposium on proposals for an "authoritarian *perestroika*" (*Telos* 84), full marketization will probably be possible only by authoritarian means anathema to any democratic society, while democratization can only mean organized recalcitrance to capitalist modernization.

Blinded by a misreading of the Gulf War — something shared by the Western Left's identification of the US with capitalist interests *tout court* — the Russian "red-brown" opposition demonizes US foreign policy as inherently expansionist and imperialist. According to this account, post-WWII US ambitions for world domination have been contained hitherto only by the USSR. Since this last obstacle has finally been removed, the US "New World Order" can now unfold unopposed even in Russia and its former satellites. But this is a very misleading reading of the US, which, since the rejection of Woodrow Wilson's project in the early 1920s, has remained torn between isolationism and interventionism. As Elena Aga-Rossi demonstrates in a reconstruction of Franklin Delano Roosevelt's foreign policy, this interpretation (shared not only by Russian nationalists and the anti-American Western Left but also by many historians specializing in this field) is predicated on serious misunderstandings of the meaning of Yalta and Roosevelt's foreign policy toward Europe. New documents found in Soviet archives show Roosevelt to be neither naive nor overly impressed by *de facto* Russian military power in 1945. His policy at the end of WWII was determined primarily by the same isolationist/interventionist considerations still determining US foreign policy today. The main objective was to keep Europe fragmented and relatively powerless, thus unable to cause a third world war, while making endless concessions to the USSR pending its realization of the self-destructive character of its collectivist economic system and its rejoining the world community.

After Yalta, however, the bipolar division of the world resulted in a much more interventionist foreign policy — at least in West European countries such as Italy, which happened to be located strategically between the two superpowers. That part of Europe falling within the American sphere of influence was prevented at all costs from going communist. One of the unforeseen consequences of what turned out to be a surprisingly stable geopolitical arrangement was that the post-WWII reconstruction of Italy's internal political institutions was structurally compromised by complementing a historically inefficient and wasteful formal government with a US-financed, corrupt but powerful subgovernment entrusted primarily with containing communist challenges. Consequently, beginning even before the end of the war with the deployment of the Mafia to facilitate the Allies' invasion of Southern Europe, the last half century of Italian history has been characterized by a split between real power relations hidden from public scrutiny and an official façade of inexplicable scandals and incidents always successfully contained. The end of the Cold War, however, finally has rendered obsolete the conditions necessitating

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this pathological predicament.

Although the Northern League originally began as a regionalist movement vindicating local autonomy and culture against the encroaching central state, whose astonishing growth into a major political force has been greatly facilitated by recent exposés of pervasive institutional corruption, its federalist proposals have also played a significant role in its success. With most of its political class in prison or under indictment (and that part still at large terminally discredited), Italy finds itself almost in the same exceptional situation as Russia and Eastern Europe in having to reconstruct its fundamental political institutions. Unlike Russia and Eastern Europe, however, Italy has not only experienced the worst features of Western liberal democracy (and thus is not inclined to uncritically buy into liberal ideology *à la* Yeltsin or Klaus) but also has not forgotten completely its fascist past. It is thus well inoculated against the kind of demagogic nationalist solutions being recycled with considerable success by resurgent right-wing parties all over Europe. Consequently, it is in an equally exceptional position to seriously consider the League's federalist proposals.

As Sebastiana Pileri, Oliver Schmidtke and Carlo Ruzza indicate, however, the weight of the past hangs heavily over the present. Understandably, those Central and Southern regions of Italy which during the last half century have benefited by the central state's (extremely wasteful) redistributive policies are reluctant to alter significally existing fiscal arrangements, which explains why the League has not been as successful there as in the North, where it is likely to gain an absolute majority in the next national elections. Similarly, because of its anti-bureaucratic stance toward the central government (the main source of employment for most New Class ideologues), the League has not attracted the large numbers of intellectuals needed to concretize its still rather general vision of federalism. Consequently, even those parts of its political program which have been published (such as the various original proposals outlined in the middle part of Gianfranco Miglio's *Una Costituzione per i Prossimi Trent'Anni*) have not received the attention they deserve. Pileri et al. argue that in an age of instant communication, when NAFTA and GATT have rendered many of the traditional state's functions irrelevant, some version of the League's federalist program appears as the most promising solution to the growing legitimation crisis affecting all European countries.

Of course, federalism is nothing new and European federalists have been active for a long time. There is even a particular school of Italian Federalism dating back, if not to pre-unification days in the 1850s (Cattaneo, Rosmini and other leading Catholic intellectuals at that time), at least since WWII (Albertini, Spinelli, etc.). As Chris Woltermann shows in a review of some of the Italian Federalist School's recent publications, however, there is considerable confusion concerning the structure and function of federalism. Relatively unfamiliar with the "really existing" US federal system and its gradual involution over the past century — especially after the New Deal — into a unitary state, many Italian federalists advocate what amounts to a bad carbon copy of

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the American system for Europe. Among other things, this helps explain why their ideas have not had much of an impact and have remained marginalized within the broader Italian and European political framework even after the launching of the project of European unification.

Only with the advent of the League and the articulation of its version of federalism (theorized by Miglio, Italy's foremost constitutional scholar) has the question finally been placed on the political agenda. It is likely to become *the* most important political issue in the immediate future if the League succeeds in gaining an absolute majority in Northern Italy, while the rest of the country belatedly gives the ex-communists and the ex-fascists an opportunity to come to power by default. If that happens, either Italy becomes a real federation or the North will seek to secede and go its own way in a new "Europe of Regions," since the Italian state is too weak even to consider military alternatives to prevent such a development.

Traumatic as they may be, these developments promise to provide viable new models of political institutions for the 21st century by addressing the central problem liberalism has been unable to solve: capitalism's systematic destruction of those communities without which it cannot thrive. By proposing to concentrate political power on "really existing" communities rather than on bureaucratic fictions such as "the nation," federalism promises to provide a viable cultural antidote to the poison of capitalist disintegration brought about by the reduction of all values to exchange-value — the only public value available to fragmented citizens whose cultural identity is so ghettoized and trivialized into "the private" that it undermines the very preconditions for viable citizenship (the socio-psychological otherness of the logic of capitalist destruction of communities). Unlike standard liberal solutions predicated on more state intervention to solve problems caused mostly by prior bureaucratic interventions which tend to intensify rather than solve the crisis, federalism allows the possibility of rejoining the public and the private on a scale small enough to constitute and reconstitute that dynamic cultural fabric without which modern life is doomed to permanent alienation.

Under the domination of economistic ideologies, during the last couple of centuries there has been a tendency to forget about this inescapable dialectic of community and commerce, whereby the failing of one inevitably results in the failure of the other. Yet, as Sergio Benvenuto shows, this theme is endemic in Western thought and, beginning at the dawn of Greek civilization with the worship of Hermes (the God of commerce) and Hestia (the Goddess of community), it has pervaded practically all Western philosophy. Hermes needs Hestia and Hestia needs Hermes for their respective well-being. Benvenuto shows how this dialectic unfolds in Descartes and Nietzsche, but a similar case can be made for Hegel, Marx, Husserl and Wittgenstein, for whom the respective vindication of the Absolute, communism, the *Lebenswelt* or the *Lebensformen* is the ultimate objective of their whole philosophical trajectory. Hermes must return to Hestia to fulfill himself: commerce needs community

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to thrive, and this community cannot be an abstract "nation" run by bureaucratic priests manipulating a passive populace primarily by means of an addictive culture industry presenting itself as neutral. In this sense, the federalist project can be seen as an attempt to vindicate Hestia after Hermes has succumbed to liberal excesses. Capitalism needs community stability as much as the community's general health requires a thriving commercial framework.

Such a state of affairs is by no means static or free of conflicts. While the community tends to contain and control capitalism, the latter constantly undermines the former, necessitating periodic reconstitutions of its cultural framework. Notwithstanding their notorious insistence on progress and change, liberals actually seek neutralization and depoliticization above all. Their fascination with the end of history thesis and obsession with human rights (as if abstract documents rather than concrete relations can guarantee mutual respect and human dignity) betray a deep-felt longing for stasis and fixity. As Carl Schmitt pointed out in "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations," a lecture delivered in 1929 when similar sentiments were being articulated in false hopes concerning the mission of the League of Nations, this is a dangerous illusion. In this lecture, translated in this issue, he did not have to appeal to higher dialectical necessities to argue that conflict is an intrinsic part of existence and the decisive element in politics. At that time, according to Schmitt, the technocratic illusion that technology would provide a common ground within which all conflicts would be readily resolved blinded European intellectuals to the fact that in Russia "technicity" had become a new anti-religious religion redefining geopolitical battle-lines. Europe had better register this new state of affairs or else it would find itself subjugated by those very powers it refused to acknowledge.

In his review of a recent book concerning Schmitt's relation to Leo Strauss, Paul Gottfried points out the continuity between Schmitt's 1927 lecture, "The Concept of the Political," and the 1929 lecture. According to Strauss, Schmitt feared European pacifists not because they were deluded but because they threatened the specificity and integrity of communities. Similarly, Strauss saw Schmitt's critique of liberalism as a rejection of acquisitive individualism and culture-as-leisure. Departing from standard readings of Schmitt's "Concept of the Political," which tend to focus exclusively on conflict, Strauss understood it as a desperate attempt to find a traditionalist alternative to liberalism. The fear of depoliticization is related to concerns with disintegrating moral and communal authorities. Schmitts polemic against liberalism and his depiction of moderns as captives of technicity and of an anti-religious mass belief in an inner-worldly asceticism are interrelated.

Schmitts 1927 lecture is a preliminary analysis because the opposing spirit is still unclear, along with the agency — the European "we" in his 1929 lecture. Only years later, in his political "Testament" ("The Plight of European Jurisprudence [1943]" in *Telos* 83) did he spell out what he meant. The "we" is that European culture which succeeds in transcending all particularities by

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positing a new humanity defined by universally-valid jurisprudence and theory (as embodied in the traditions of Roman law and the rationalism of Western science). From this perspective it becomes clear why he identifies Russia as the enemy: its technicity is a form of idolatry or alienation which may lead to self-destruction.

In his introduction to Schmitt's lecture, John P. McCormick correctly identifies surprising similarities between the analyses provided by Schmitt and Western Marxism. By investing technology with divine attributes, the Russians fall into idolatry (since there is nothing sacred in an allegedly neutral and apolitical technology), while in alienating irreducibly human political imperatives they end up in the worst forms of reification. It is ultimately a matter of collective cultural amnesia, which Schmitt sees in terms of a failure of intellectuals. It is their task to "remember" culture and tradition for future generations. As a self-defined *katechon* committed to preventing any further deterioration of European values, Schmitt wants his fellow intellectuals to remain true to their calling by protecting, recreating and transmitting their cultural heritage.

Reactionary as it may appear at first, this analysis is strikingly similar in intent to Gramsci's critique of "traditional" intellectuals and Foucault's later attack on the logic of power/knowledge. While Gramsci's call for the development of "organic" intellectuals to displace their "traditional" counterpart seems far removed from Schmitt's critique of technicity for breaking with traditional Western values, the logic is strikingly similar. In both cases the problem is with the instrumentalizaton of technology either as a narcotic promising impossible neutralizations and depoliticizations or a means for further dehumanization of the masses. Like Schmitt's "clerics," Gramsci's traditional intellectuals have also failed. However, unlike Schmitt who wants to reawaken this group, Gramsci considers them finished. Thus the main thrust of his "Americanism and Fordism" is concerned with how, far from contributing to the development of "a new humanity," the most advanced sectors of US capitalism threatened to reduce man to the level of an ape by successfully manipulating his very instinctual make-up, eradicating his "spirituality" and "humanity."

While Schmitt wants to shake European clerics out of their slumber, Gramsci calls for their displacement by a new breed of organic intellectuals. One of his main concerns was the *elitist* character of liberal culture at a time in which large sectors of the population (the proletariat) were systematically excluded from cultural life. The organic intellectual was meant to play a mediational role. By reawakening traditional (originally Christian, subsequently republican) cultural values betrayed by the liberal regime, such as "freedom, equality and fraternity," he would raise political consciousness, thus paving the way for the eventual revolutionary overthrow of the *de facto* exclusionary liberal regime. But his concept of communism included, among other things, a society in which everyone could share the collective cultural heritage.

Different as Foucault's analysis of power/knowledge may be from Schmitt's critique of technicity, both are concerned with relations of domination orchestrated

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by deploying cognitive structures. Unlike Foucault, who sees power embedded in the very fabric of knowledge, however, Schmitt locates it in political divisions predicated on friend-enemy configurations — something which ultimately takes the form of irreconcilable cultural differences. In both cases, however, the critique is articulated within a shared horizon of a healthy society of free individuals, fully aware of their cultural heritage and thus impossible to manipulate and dominate.

Concerned primarily with international relations and geopolitics, Schmitt did not develop a critique of the kind of New Class domination being developed by others toward the end of his life, perhaps because he questioned whether the age of technicity could accomodate an intellectual class similar to the clerics of the past. Yet his critique of liberals as a class already prefigured something of the kind since he showed how, despite liberalism's attempt to elude the political with neutralizations and depoliticizations of culture, this could not be done. According to Schmitt, no specific political idea can be derived from liberalism any more than from technology, and neither of the two could remain neutral. At the end of the 20th century it appears technology can become an economic as well as a political weapon. But the recently floated notion that geoeconomics is replacing geopolitics obfuscates more than it clarifies. In response to Walter Rathenau, who claimed at the beginning of this century that destiny today is not politics but economics, Schmitt said: "It would be more exact to say that . . . what has occurred is that economics has become political and thereby the destiny." The destiny of the 21st century will probably be no less political.

Paul Piccone and Gary Ulmen

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Rouge et Noire:
Contradictions of the Soviet Collapse

Georgi M. Derluguian

Unlike the bloody beginning of the Soviet Union, its end has been amazingly peaceful. Mikhail Gorbachev has been eulogized for accomplishing this "velvet" revolution from above. From the standpoint of the peoples of Transcaucasia, Moldavia and much of Central Asia, however, things look rather different. There events have been no more "velvet" than in Albania and Yugoslavia.[1] There is a temptation to see all this as a historical reversal. Cities and places such as Sebastopol, Sarajevo and the Caucasus, associated with old battles described in musty monographs of 19th and early 20th century history, as well as Turkestan, which has not been in the headlines since the Crimean War, are once again in the news. This is not the result of any historical reversal but rather of geopolitical expansion. Both the Caucasus and the Balkans, historically the northernmost tips of the Middle East, have become cultural extensions of Eastern Europe. Both Russia and the Ukraine are now claiming the Crimean Tatar Khanate, formerly the domain of the Ottoman Empire, as their ethno-historic patrimony.[2]

Although turmoil in Russia and the Ukraine has led to an increase in criminal violence, there has been no actual warfare, warlordism or

1. From the standpoint of Cold War geopolitics, it is obvious that the present chaos in Albania and in the former Yugoslavia is the result of their *not* having been Soviet satellites.

2. Occasionally this new geography can be both outlandish and entertaining. For example, the former Soviet Socialist Autonomous Republic of Kalmykin has now become Hal'mch Tanga, the only officially Bhuddist state in the "new Europe."

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"ethnic cleansing." The dreaded specter of Jewish pogroms has also failed to materialize. For the most part, this can be explained by the different ways social power and the *real economy* — the organic unity of the "socialist planned" and the "shadow market" sectors of the economy — function in the Southern and Northern parts of the former USSR. Ethnic conflicts are routinely perceived as expressions of long-standing cultural cleavages (at any rate, this is how "ethnic" violence is being construed and legitimated by both victims and perpetrators). While it is impossible to change the past, ethnic conflicts may appear susceptible to resolution if the problem is conceptualized within the context of global Fordism. Rather than viewing these struggles in terms of the distant past, it may be more fruitful to focus on the extraordinary post-1945 economic expansion.

Not surprisingly, discussions of these matters have invariably taken place from within the normative perspective of the capitalist West. For the Caucasus, however, a more relevant point of reference is the "European" Mediterranean, just as for Afghanistan it is Central Asia. Parallels between the histories of Italy, Turkey, Greece and even Israel, on the one hand, and Georgia, Armenia, etc., on the other, are striking. But if Calabria under the Italian or the EC version of capitalist Fordism is not all that different from Karabakh under the anti-capitalist neo-Stalinist regime, does that mean there is nothing unique about the Soviet experience?

Neo-Stalinist Fordism and its Two Avatars

Neo-Stalinist Fordism emerged as early as 1948 and was in place by 1962 — a symbolic date marked, among other events, by the tragic yet ultimately successful general strike in Novocherkassk, which demonstrated the limits of popular patience and state terror prompting the Politburo to sanction "temporary" purchases of US grain. Political decisions made late in 1962 paved the way for a new consensus. Such a shift was both possible and necessary within the reified Cold War geopolitics of the time — space flights, Soviet breakthroughs in the Third World, the Cuban missile crisis, the final partition of Germany and the open break with China. Global stabilization meant internal stabilization — the goal of every Soviet ruling elite since the death of Stalin. By the late 1950s the Northern industrial parts of the USSR (today derided as the Soviet rust belt) was turning into a consumer society. Although meager by comparison with the West, by contemporary Soviet standards Soviet consumption was astounding. It provided the ruling elite with

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wealth and legitimacy, and signaled the end of the ideological "thaw" — Khrushchev's attempt to formulate a neo-Bolshevik strategy based on a communist "Protestant ethic." This new strategy was necessitated by the very processes which brought about neo-Stalinist Fordism. By the end of Stalin's life, the available labor pool, mostly peasants and women, had been exhausted. The increasingly stable and sophisticated urban population of the Soviet Northern Tier (extending from Leningrad to Vladivostok) was rapidly gaining social power — a power which it began to exercise in a panoply of spontaneous organizations and movements from the seemingly inoffensive technological clubs and gatherings of stamp collectors to the more ambivalent public poetry readings, movements for cooperative housing, anti-crime groups and "people's representatives" at court hearings, down to the outright illegal study groups and religious congregations.[3]

Khrushchev responded by attempting to recycle an "honest and efficient" communism emphasizing communal (as opposed to private) life, buttressed by state and community repression.[4] He marketed this strategy in a very colorful and energetic manner in collaboration with a "creative intelligentsia" seeking social power side by side with reform-mind apparatchiki. This quest for a "socialism with a human face" was obviously an integral part of the project of the international Left in the 1950s and 1960s. It failed because it conflicted with the most basic interests of the Soviet ruling elite and of an increasingly significant sector of the Soviet population. Both desired stability and a higher standard of living. Thus, almost by default, the Brezhnev regime opted for a *lumpen*-consumerism while officially indicting those very characteristics which constituted its very being — "parasitism," "crassness," "social irresponsibility" and "philistinism." Obviously, such brazen hypocracy was bad politics, and the Soviet elite was painfully aware of it. The result was a protracted internal debate between die-hard supporters of the *status quo* and self-described "liberal" advocates of proto-market reforms. The former feared they had everything to lose and nothing to gain; the latter believed that a market economy would provide more leeway and legitimacy. They were both right.

A paternalistic and indulgent ethos of consumerism became the main mode of legitimation for the neo-Stalinist power elite. An alternative

3. See Victor Zaslavsky, *The Neo-Stalinist State* (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 1992).

4. Recall the atheist paroxysms of 1962, the constant campaigns against Western consumerism complemented by the official glorification of Komsomol comraderie and, last but not least, the attack on household agriculture.

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mode of legitimation — nationalism —was also being deployed (although it remained strictly forbidden by the informally accepted imperatives of preserving the Soviet imperial state).[5] The Soviet elite, however, was stuck with what turned out to be a fatal constraint rooted in its very character. Different from the peculiarly modern Western bureaucrats, Soviet functionaries had a much broader historical base.[6] Only in capitalist countries can a bureaucracy exist as the rational embodiment of administrative functions. In the USSR, where there was no differentiation of social spheres, it did not make sense to define power in terms of function. This undifferentiated character of power typical of all communist countries made them relatively and ultimately unmanageable, which helps explain their collapse in 1989-1991. Unable to delegate power in a rational manner to functionally specialized groups (the KGB being the sole exception), there was no way of steering society in any particular direction.

Given this stalemate, the Soviet population could not participate in any spontaneous public activity — Moscow's worst nightmare, dramatically exemplified by "Solidarity" in Poland. While the population had no outlet for its discontent other than private grumbling,[7] it was left alone and enjoyed relative prosperity, symbolized by tiny yet private apartments (as opposed to the Stalinist communal slums). Such "prosperity" was accompanied by guarantees against mass disruptions and repressions (such as collectivization and industrialization), and an implicit understanding that the state of affairs was irreversible. This was the essence of Brezhnev's new "social contract." It was also the Soviet version of Fordism. This neo-Stalinist Fordism was peculiar. In an otherwise "modern" society it was not the accumulation of capital that led to power but the accumulation of social power itself. In these terms, the neo-Stalinist state was a tremendous success and its "stagnation" may also be interpreted as a crisis of the over-production of social stability.

On the other hand, its devastating consequences can best be understood by examining the role played by the Soviet Southern Tier or

5. Although the much discussed ethnic components of the Second Secretaries of the Russian Republican Party were susceptible to "local corruption," i.e., they dutifully shared loyalties with their actual power base, there was an informal agreement between National Republican leaders and central party leaders to effectively check nationalism so as "not to rock the boat."

6. See Andrei I. Fursov, "Biurokratia kak istorichcskaia forma organizatsii vlasti," in *Mirovaia Ekonomika i Mezhdunarodnye Otnozheniia* (1989), No. 7.

7. This phenomenon has been called the "privatization of protest." See Alexander Motyl, *Will the Non-Russians Rebel? States, Ethnicity, and Stability in the USSR* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1987).

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"Sun Belt" stretching from Moldavia to Central Asia. Primarily rural and thus "ethnographic," the various regions of this area had little in common save their opposition to the industrialized, urbanized populations of the Northern Tier. Here the dynamics of neo-Stalinist Fordism were markedly different. The development of a consumer culture in the North indirectly encouraged the growth of household cash-crop production in the South (fruits, vegetables and flowers). The unresponsiveness of the Soviet economy and its notorious inability to meet rapidly rising consumer expectations contributed to the development of monopolistic prices exacted by the peasants in the South who controlled this illicit production.

Since Soviet planners paid little attention to the countryside, an unspoken *modus vivendi* gradually developed between the regime and the predominantly rural and non-Slavic South, whereby peasants and artisans ended up being left on their own.[8] As a result, the institutions of the neo-Stalinist welfare state never penetrated the South outside the major industrial centers. The Soviet Southern Tier remained an area with considerable sectors of non-wage labor and strong households organized primarily around pre-modern clientelistic power relations. This state of affairs was thus responsible for the persistence of the "ethnographic phenomenon," i.e., the production and reproduction of ethnically defined social structures. This, however, does not mean that the Southern Tier remained a preserve of archaic social relations untouched by neo-Stalinist affluence, mass culture and the new "social contract."

In addition to welcoming bazaars in the industrial centers of the South, in the 1960s Northerners began vacationing in Southern resorts bringing with them considerable cash. Labor migration also helped introduce privatization and additional capital. The peculiarities of the Soviet economy made the process somewhat different from its counterpart in Western Europe. Many industrious Southerners, especially Armenians with their land-starved homelands and artisan traditions, began traveling to Central Russia and Siberia with unofficial construction teams or to sell their "almost Italian" shoes. Some Southerners sought well-paid oil industry jobs in the far North (Azeris and Lezghians, with

8. This *modus vivendi* could develop only in those areas the Communist Party apparatus considered relatively unimportant. When Moscow's strategic concerns were involved, the situation was radically different, as can be seen in the virtual forced labor in cotton plantations, the brutal settlements of nomads, and the various genocidal resettlements during WWII.

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experience in the old Baku oil fields), others (Koreans and Uzbeks) started semi-official garden farms in Russia, still others (e.g., North Caucasian mountaineers who organized criminal gangs in Moscow and Leningrad) redeployed their traditional skills in rustling cattle to stealing cars and VCRs. Here household relations facilitated the mobilization of the labor force in the "shadow" productive sector, while corrupt local officials generally overlooked the private appropriation of collectively-owned land and equipment. In the Soviet North, on the other hand, large industrial enterprises dominated the economy and corruption took a different form (the assignment of state dachas, workplace distribution of goods and services, foreign travel, etc.).

The new wealth in the Southern Tier had to be socially integrated, and it was, first and foremost by the old peasant households (which those in the North saw as further proof of Southern backwardness and "Oriental despotism"). Further integration occurred by means of reconstituted ethnic and regional solidarities, articulated through extra-legal clientelistic networks within local party and government frameworks. Often described as the "Mafia," these networks were essentially the "shadow" versions of the Soviet state controlling and taxing the "shadow" sectors of the local economy. Long before the collapse of the USSR, various nationalities had managed to establish horizontal sovereignties among themselves, usually with one "titular" nationality lending its name to the republic and monopolizing the state apparatus. Except for Russian-speaking Northerners, access to the state was structured along ethnic and regional lines, relegating all others to virtually immigrant status (even if they were born there), as in the case of the Armenians in Azerbaijan and the Azeris in Armenia.[9] Such arrangements tend to translate into bloody conflicts if these regions fall into political and economic chaos.

Troubled Times: 1992/93

The current chaos in the former Soviet Union is generally understood to be the result of Gorbachev's *perestroika*. Democratization is

9. This ethnic stratification of power was further complicated by numerous groups (minority Armenians, Greeks, Kurds, Koreans, and various "Russian speaking" minorities) who became "intermediaries" as a result of their particular position in the local economy — the "shadow" sector or the socialist "administrative" apparatus. Furthermore, within the various nationalities particular group identities would coalesce, threatening ethnic coherence, e.g., Azeris from Baku opposed to their rural kinsmen (who contributed mass strength to the nationalist movement at critical moments); Tbilissi's real "Georgians" and Western Georgia's "Mingrelians" (who supported "their" ousted president Gamsakhurdia); competing traditional clans among the Chechens; Cossacks opposed to the rest of the Russians; etc.

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blamed almost routinely for ethnic unrest. But the chaos in the Southern Tier clearly predates *perestroika*. Developments during Gorbachev's tenure have tended to obscure the devastating consequences of Andropov's abortive reform. His "disciplinary campaigns" in the Soviet North were largely perfunctory. All the hassle with police and part-time vigilantes chasing state employees and students out of baths, beauty salons, movie houses and stores during working hours only contributed to a new wave of political jokes. In the South, however, those campaigns resulted in criminal charges against more than one-third of state employees.[10]

The resulting disruption throughout the Southern Tier was unimaginable. Few had realized how widespread and functional the "shadow" economy had become to the stability of neo-Stalinist society. Andropov's repressive campaign was simple. The head of the KGB deployed trusted personnel to identify, promote and consolidate all "healthy forces," i.e., those local cadres untainted by corruption and concerned with "moral decay."[11] The "purification" campaign reached Moscow in 1985, when the best and the smartest of the new cadres were brought in from the provinces to cleanse Moscow's party organization — including Gorbachev from the Northern Caucasus and Yeltsin from his native Sverdlovsk.[12] Andropov's historical achievement was the final realization that every means to save the neo-Stalinist state had been exhausted. Subsequently, *glasnost*, *perestroika* and proto-market experiments left the bulk of the Soviet ruling elite — mostly the Northern "captains of industry" but also a few newly-converted Southern "nationalists" — well-prepared to survive in the brave new world of post-Fordist capitalism and disintegrating empire.

The short and uneventful reign of Konstantin Chernenko only stalled Andropov's reforms, making possible Gorbachev's aggressive resumption of the "purification" campaign which in less than a year resulted

10. Thus, 38% of the railway police were fired or imprisoned in the Krasnodar territory. Raids on restaurants and video parlors along the Black Sea coast and on collective farms in Uzbekistan required KGB troops from the Frontier Guards. An investigation of Kazakhstan's Ministry of Automobile Transportation revealed such a system of embezzlement that virtually all employees could have been indicted. Since this would have paralyzed the whole region, a collective plea-bargain was arranged. Rank and file employees were exempted from prosecution in exchange for confessions and the return of embezzled funds.

11. See Arkady Vaksberg, *The Soviet Mafia* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1991).

12. Among other honest provincial prefects were the Azerbaijani Geidar Aliev and the Georgian Eduard Shevardnadze, both KGB generals belonging to Andropov's patronage network. They were both brought in from the South to strengthen the top levels in Moscow.

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in the crossing of a deeply symbolic threshold. The removal in December 1985 of Kunaev, the long-standing boss of Kazakhstan, precipitated bloody nationalist riots in Alma-Ata. According to widespread speculation, these riots were sponsored by Kunaev's lieutenants fearful of their future. Their agitation fed directly into a more spontaneous outbreak of protests by university students from Kazakhstan's poorer Southern provinces. These would-be members of the future elite were enraged by the "honest" meritocratic agenda of Kolbin, the newly appointed leader. The fight against corruption and the new meritocratic norms threatened both legal career mechanisms open to native Kazakhs (Soviet affirmative action) and the extra-legal patronage networks.

Since Kazakhstan was one of the USSR's national republics, the most prestigious positions had to be occupied by titular cadres. This was one of the most inviolable norms of the neo-Stalinist state, which distinguished it from Stalin's regime. Kunaev, who originally had been appointed under Khrushchev and rose to power under Brezhnev, was the first ethnic Kazakh ever to rule in Kazakhstan. Kolbin, on the other hand, was an ethnic Russian, although ethnicity did not play a crucial role in the December 1985 events in Alma-Ata.[13] Formerly a First Secretary of the heavily industrialized Central Volga province, he earned his well-known reputation as a fighter against corruption in Georgia. There was no doubt about the meaning of his appointment, which is why many Russians in the ruling apparatus also whole-heartedly supported the Kazakh protesters. The slogan of the original rally in Alma-Ata's main square was not the supremacist "Kazakhstan for the Kazakhs" but the ethnically more inclusive and territorial "Kazakhstan for the Kazakhstanis." Both the native supremacist slogan and the appalling mob violence seem to have been encouraged (if not directly instigated) by imperial state agents pretending to fight local nepotism, corruption, ethnic domination and disorder. At any rate, the rally turned bloody only after the appearance of armed troops.[14]

Gorbachev's reforms in the first half of 1988 finally legalized public political activities independent of the communist power apparatus. The

13. The other, no less inviolable but nonetheless unstated norm of power dispersion in the Southern Tier was that Russians and other "Europeans" were not to be excluded from the ruling elite, even though there remained an important distinction between local settlers and those who had come from the North.

14. This soon became a standard scenario in virtually every Soviet republic. What varied was only the extent to which *perestroika* agents were allowed to engage in violence, dependent upon the republic's proximity to the West and, subsequently, the exposure the events were likely to receive in the media.

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rationale was to deploy democratization and *glasnost* against entrenched prefects resisting the pressures and incentives of systemic reform. Both were intended to legitimate purges from above by appealing to popular grievances and, if necessary, by mobilizing popular support. Unlike the Chinese phenomenon known by this name, this "cultural revolution" had a more general objective theme as a routine strategy for the centralization of power in communist states. In the Soviet context it was the phenomenon of neo-Stalinist Fordism which gave *glasnost* its "velvet" character and ruled out the need for Red Guards.

Although communist societies do not normally tolerate private property, late neo-Stalinism was rapidly creating property owners, thus paving the way for its own demise. While there was considerable alienation within collective apartment complexes, this state of affairs also created conditions for the emergence of private space — even private political space. Exposure to Western consumer values and stereotypes was also a contributing factor. After 1989 Soviet citizens were closer to their West European counterparts than they had ever been.[15]

The situation in the South was strikingly different. Whether Southerners lived in mud-brick slums, grape-covered villas or in apartment houses, there was little private space and a strong sense of community. Their penchant for conspicuous consumption, courteousness and a marked sense of humor were the other side of internalized mechanisms of mutual surveillance. This helps explain why, despite its apparent "market orientation," the booming "shadow" economy fostered hardly any private property relations. Producers were closely monitored by several layers of "Mafia" and state agents. While the more or less illegal lease of land and other means of production remained the dominant pattern, land tenure never came even close to private ownership. This was obviously a crucial condition for the retention of social power by the Southern apparatchiki — a *raison d'être* for an otherwise redundant state socialist sector. The same was true even for large industrial enterprises and state institutions. State functionaries in the South normally

15. There were, of course, groups without property in the Soviet North, mostly in the countryside. But by the time of *perestroika* these were minorities lacking any voice or power. Urban, unskilled and disproportionately well-paid workers constituted an important potential reserve for anti-market factions within the apparatus. However, from the first popular rallies in 1988 to the bloody Moscow insurrection of October 1993, political struggles by these *lumpen* elements were relatively constrained. During the three decades of the neo-Stalinist regime, Soviet Northerners learned two basic truths: that the arbitrary use of violence was wrong and that communist hardliners were pathetically unable to deal with post-Fordist realities.

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owed their power and legitimacy to those who had appointed them, which allowed managers and apparatchiki to rule like despots within their respective enterprises.

Such was not the case with competent Northern managers, who were autonomous agents *vis-à-vis* their superiors and, even more so, local authorities. By the time of Gorbachev's reforms, Northern managers had become a clearly defined and self-conscious group. They were often divided in matters of policy, but they were socially coherent. When the Communist Party apparatus was finally abolished in 1991, these Northern managers were already translating successfully their undifferentiated power into capitalist property rights. Southern managers, on the other hand, remained much more like prebendal lords whose role was to extract tribute and pass part of it further up the ladder of power. Their relations to upper levels and the local authorities left little room for bargaining over redistribution among the elite. If in the North socialist managers were bargaining mostly about industrial supplies and output figures, in the South it was a much more subtle struggle over the share of surplus extracted.

Glasnost and democratization led to a bifurcation between North and South in the post-communist chaos. The deprivatization of protest in the USSR, which in the North resulted in political movements, in the South only generated violent mass mobilizations around ethnic identities. While in the North extreme nationalism was relegated to the fringe, in the South the same fate befell groups among the intelligentsia advocating individual democratic norms. The final blow came in late 1991. The Southern republics did not secede from the USSR. Rather, Russia dumped them by signing the Commonwealth Treaty with the other two Northern Slavic republics. Significantly, semi-Northern Kazakhstan was included soon thereafter, while the Central Asian republics had to fight for the privilege of joining the Commonwealth. Transcaucasia and Moldavia, where popular nationalism had gained momentum, were allowed in only after considerable humiliation.

The Fourth Russian Empire?

The most neglected defense in the summer of 1993 may have been the tacit beginning of Russia's imperial revival, signaled by Yeltin's political fortunes with the April referendum and even more by his resolute suppression of the October insurrection. Also, by 1993 reform-minded communists were back in power in Lithuania, Moldavia, Georgia and Azerbaijan, replacing fiery nationalists whose tumultuous rule had

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turned out to be impractical in terms of military and economic relations with Russia. Thanks to the presence of Russian troops, the old apparatus held on to power in the Central Asian republic, as was dramatically demonstrated by the suppression of Islamic guerrillas in Tajikistan. The pragmatic president of Kazakhstan, Nursultan Nazarbaev, even argued that the new states would have to "give up some sovereignty" in order to sustain themselves. Similarly, the staunchly nationalistic governments of Estonia and Latvia faced mounting pressure from their numerous disenfranchised Russian-speaking residents, whose plight became Moscow's explicit concern.

Was a different path possible? How realistic were hopes that the EC would open up to Eastern Europe and that Central Asian republics would be reunited with their kinsmen in Turkey? In terms of post-Cold War geopolitics, there is no other power in the world willing or able to replace Russia in any of the former Soviet republics or even in much of Eastern Europe. What might have prevented the post-Soviet universe from being dominated by Russia was another potential giant, the Ukraine. But Ukrainian leaders squandered their historical opportunity in 1992, when Russia was in a very weak position. The popular mandate of Ukraine's President Kravchuk in 1991 was to maintain the *status quo* and to prevent radical nationalisms from taking power. The historical mistake of these nationalists was to push for the trappings of Ukrainian statehood ahead of a viable national economy. No bickering with Russia over the Black Sea fleet or threats to preserve nuclear weapons can now remedy Kiev's lack of economic reforms.

In the meantime, Russia's economic reform in January 1992 dramatically changed the population's mentality. Now it is widely understood that change is unavoidable and irreversible. The pace and nature of this change — something which has also been the center of the liberal-conservative debate in the West for the past two centuries — has yet to be decided. Political feuds between Yeltsin and his opponents in parliament may have seemed bewildering and offensive, but they did result in some practical experience in political democracy. Early in October 1993 it was not parliament but the building which was stormed. Its occupants at the time were only extra-parliamentary remnants.

Yeltsin's skillfully-run referendum in April 1993 showed what distance had been traveled since the amateurish electoral activism of *perestroika*. Russia's new statesmen have learned to step back and play the role of arbiters in the ongoing ethnic strife in the Southern Tier. More to the point, the fourth Russian empire being shaped by Yeltsin's democrats

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is going to be informal — it will need no costly and politically untenable mechanisms of direct imperial rule as advocated by Russian conservatives. Market mechanisms are much more appropriate and effective. According to pragmatic democrats, Russia's new interests can best be served by a negotiated set of security and economic arrangements with stable sovereign states of the former USSR. It is these people, rather than their chauvinistic opponents, who are the real empire builders.

Moscow now seems to favor political and economic isolation from the internal problems of other republics — a policy very appealing to the ruling elites of non-Russian republics. During the last few years of the Soviet Union such an informal empire was already being pre-figured. Under Brezhnev, regional power groups enjoyed sheltered stability, sizable economic benefits and a certain cultural autonomy in exchange for loyalty to the imperial center (along with bribes to Moscow bureaucrats). This contrast was unilaterally broken by Andropov's purification campaigns. Gorbachev's policies further exacerbated the problem with non-Russian elites, prompting them to ride the dangerous tide of ethnic sentiment and separatism. Some did it badly and perished, but a few have been able to change color and eventually become nationalist social democrats (Brazauskas in Lithuania) or nationalist paternalist dictators (Karimov in Uzbekistan). Both still need Russia's enormous economy and military might: the former, in the attempt to reproduce the economic miracle of post-Cold War "Finlandization"; the latter, to maintain sovereignty *vis-à-vis* the misery of neighboring Afghanistan.

Externally, there is no strong opposition to a democratic Russia and the reconstitution of an informal empire. Internally, ethnic separatism within the Russian Commonwealth looms as the biggest challenge to Moscow. The new Russian empire, however, is unlikely to share the way of the former USSR. The current bargaining is over the federal balance of powers. The tragic examples of Yugoslavia, Tajikistan, Moldavia or Karabakh provide sober restraint to reckless extremism. Patterns of future normalization seem to point to a fourth Russian empire more open to the outside world and devoid of superpower ambitions, although this will not allow them to avoid problems such as mass migrations, ecological devastation, economic disruption in relation to the world economy and intractable ethnic problems. At any rate, Russia's developing economic scene is likely to be dominated by monopolistic industrial giants linked to the state bureaucracy, which invites corruption. But as the postwar examples of Italy and Japan have demonstrated, this is not necessarily an obstacle to rapid economic growth. In

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long term prospects, the new political and economic arrangements are likely to realize Andrei Sakharov's grand vision of a Confederation of Sovereign Nations of Eurasia. Gorbachev considered this vision an impractical utopia, which proved to be fatal to his political career. A new generation of politicians in Moscow may have finally learned that in times of historical change there is nothing more pragmatic than a good utopian vision.

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Russia and the Problem of Democratic Transition

Victor Zaslavsky

The 1991 Coup, the 1993 Referendum and the Moscow Riots.

The failure of the August 1991 coup in the Soviet Union was both a culmination and the end of *perestroika* — a true revolutionary act which swept away the Soviet Communist Party as the undisputed master of the country for over seventy years. It seemed that the communist regime would never be able to reconstitute itself. But the old structures have managed to survive and reassemble themselves within the new power structure. The resulting dualism of power took on a very unusual character. The new administrators seeking to introduce market reforms have come to dominate the executive branch, while legislative power — the various soviets within the city and the provinces, up to the Supreme Soviet and the enormous, clumsy and non-functional Congress of People's Deputies, the Russian parliament — have remained in the hands of the supporters of the old Soviet regime. Only a fraction of the Congress deputies was democratically elected, while the majority was nominated and promoted by the Communist Party while still in power. By and large, these communist deputies dissociated themselves from the Communist Party after the failed *coup*, but they remained inextricably linked to the one-party regime.

The only political agent in a position to resolve this conflict between the executive and the legislative branches was Boris Yeltsin, not so much because of his charisma as the leader of the resistance against the *coup* (which dissipated during the difficult first year of reform), but because of his absolutely unique status as the first democratically elected President of Russia entrusted with special powers up to the end of

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December 1992. During 1992, Yeltsin sought to create a government of national unity while remaining above the political fray by striking a compromise with parliament rather than dissolving it and calling for early elections. Respecting initially the conditions of the compromise, during its session of December 1992 parliament agreed to hold a national referendum on confidence in the President and on the framework for early elections of the new legislative organs requested by Yeltsin.

In the first months of 1993, the continuing deterioration of the standard of living among the population further diminished Yeltsin's and the reformist government's popularity. The leaders of the pro-communist parliament went on a counteroffensive. In March 1993, Parliament rescinded its decision to hold the referendum and, in an even more cynical resolution, prohibited elections from taking place before 1995, thus prolonging its prerogatives for another two years and reserving, thanks to the contradictions of the existing constitution, the right to postpone elections for another two years after 1995. In addition, parliament approved a decree which transferred the control of all mass media to the soviets, thus returning to the pre-*glasnost* situation.

Having recognized that the continuing deadlock between the executive and the legislative powers threatened Russia's governability and unity, Yeltsin and his group decided to take drastic measures to eliminate the dualism of power as quickly as possible. By lining up the necessary support to force a referendum and warning the deputies in a televised address to the nation that he might assume "special powers," Yeltsin compelled parliament to reverse its decision and agree to a popular referendum. Parliament, however, seized the opportunity to design the questions in such a way as to make Yeltsin's victory almost impossible.

In fact, the population was asked not only to express its confidence in the Russian president but also to support his economic reform program — the program that had liberalized prices and unleashed an inflation which within a year had practically wiped out the life savings of the populace. By the day of the referendum the purchasing power of the population's bank deposits was less than five percent of what it was a year earlier.[1] Another factor working against Yeltsin was the considerable resistance by local authorites in many provinces and autonomous ethnic regions, who attempted to claim *de facto* economic or even political independence by exempting their territories from the referendum.[2]

1. *Izvestia* (June 1, 1993), p. 1.
2. Vera Tolz, "Power Struggle in Russia: The Role of the Republics and Regions," *RFE/RL Research Report*, No. 15 (1993).

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Finally, Yeltsin's expressed goal of gaining a mandate to adopt a new constitution, whose key points had been announced only a few days prior to the referendum, could hardly inspire popular enthusiasm and mass participation.

The Russian population reacts to appeals for defending the existing constitution or adopting a new one differently from the population of a Western country, precisely because these appeals are received within a very different historical experience. Traditionally, the Russian populace has always expressed a marked distrust of the written law. The daily experience of generations vouchsafed the famous remark attributed to the chief of the secret police under Czar Nicolas I: "the laws are written for the subjects, not for the authorities." This attitude was greatly reinforced by decades of one-party rule. Furthermore, the very character of the existing constitution justified indifference and popular distrust towards law and justice, as it is rife with numerous contradictions and paradoxes starting from the absurdity of the Yeltsin government invoking the constitution to ban the Communist Party after the failed *coup*, even though the same party was enshrined in the constitution as the "leading and guiding force of Soviet society."

The media and many analysts' gloomy predictions that Yeltsin would probably fail to mobilize a sufficient number of voters to participate in the referendum to make it valid, and that he would definitely fail to win approval of the economic reforms, were proven totally wrong. Yeltsin won by a surprisingly wide margin. Two thirds of the eligible voters participated in the referendum — a figure that appears even more impressive if one takes into account that local leaderships of some ethnic republics succeeded in preventing their people from voting. Most voters not only expressed confidence in the President but also approved his social and economic policies.[3]

These results appear even more striking, however, if one takes into account the specific juncture in the reform process within which the referendum took place. First, it was obvious that the apparently procedural constitutional conflict between the executive and legislative branches of government concealed a frontal collision between the advocates of radical reform striving for Russia's re-entrance into the world market and the supporters of the old order who tried to thwart these reforms and preserve their privileges and political power. The results of the referendum testified to a profound change in popular mentality

3. "Okonchatelnye itogi Vserossijskogo referenduma," *Izvestia* (May 6, 1993), p. 2.

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that had taken place during the *perestroika* years and especially during the first year of market reforms. Second, the results confirmed the existence of a deep cleavage within Russian society. Obviously, support for Yeltsin on the part of those social and regional groups that had already benefited from reforms could be taken for granted. As expected, younger, better educated and more urbanized voters overwhelmingly supported Yeltsin's policies. It came as a surprise, however, that the largest cities where there had been the most drastic fall in the standard of living provided the most consistent support for the reformist course. Yeltsin's victory was secured by those politically active and mobilized members of society who voted not so much on the basis of "consumer materialism" as on the understanding that their basic interests would be better protected in a market society. Finally, the outcome of the referendum was decided by the regional vote, confirming that the ongoing "great transformation" had filtered down to the vast expanse of provincial Russia.

Having lost the referendum, the parliament's majority and the forces of the old order it represented were demoralized. The adventurous line of "the worse-the-better" policy prevailed among the deputies whose only hope to remain in power was pinned on obstructing the reform process and provoking a crisis of such proportions that would fully destabilize the country or even bring it to open Civil War. In a few post-referendum months the parliament turned hostile, supporting mercenary border wars in Georgia and Moldavia and doing its best to provoke an armed conflict between Russia and the Ukraine, claiming the port of Sebastopol if not the whole Crimean peninsula to be part of Russia. The peak of these destabilizing activities was reached when parliament overturned the budget law proposed by the government and approved its own version of the budget which would have tripled the deficit and stopped privatization. At this point Yeltsin belatedly dissolved parliament and called for new elections in December 1993.

The parliament's majority led by its chairman Khasbulatov[4] remained in permanent session in the parliament building, dismissed Yeltsin and voted vice-president Alexander Rutskoi as the new president of Russia. Rutskoi immediately formed a new government, some of whose ministers were still under investigation for their participation in the August 1991 coup, and issued a host of decrees totally ignored

4. Rusian Khasbulatov was a representative from the Chechen Republic, who found himself without a constituency when the acting Chechen government proclaimed the republic's independence and deprived him of his Chechen citizenship.

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by both the executive organs and the population. His frenetic activity revealed the farcical and absurd character of the parliament's resistance. Parliament had no popular support, while in the people's eyes Yeltsin remained the country's undisputed leader, despite the unconstitutionality of his decree,

During the two weeks Yeltsin had given the deputies to vacate the premises most members of parliament accepted its dissolution and left the building, some in agreement with Yeltsin's decree and others in exchange for small bribes and perks. The hard core of a couple of hundred representatives, headed by Rutskoi and Khasbulatov, barricaded themselves in the Moscow "White House" and called for an uprising. The call was heeded by an eerie coalition of raving nationalists, neo-Bolsheviks, fundamentalists, paranoiacs and thugs — Russias lunatic fringe, known locally as the redbrown crowd.[5] Their demonstration in defense of parliament turned into an armed attack on some government buildings, including the television center. The government was caught unprepared. The ensuing confusion and loss of life damaged Yeltsin's image. Thanks to the excellent coverage by CNN, the riot became a major mass media event and probably had even more of an impact abroad than in Russia itself. Moscow's population and the country at large remained calm, even if the scene of tanks bombarding the parliament building in the center of Moscow will remain indelible in their minds.

Yeltsin's government came out of the crisis simultaneously humiliated and reinforced. The second and probably final step in the anti-Soviet revolution has been taken. The aborted August 1991 coup resulted in the ban on the Communist Party. The October 1993 riot resulted in the dissolution of the most durable legacy of the Soviet political system, the soviets, that in many regions had become a haven for former communist officials fighting to hold on to power. Regional councils, many of which had sided with parliament, were summarily dismissed. The symbolic significance of the removal of the Lenin Mausoleum from Red Square should not be underestimated. The October 1993 events revived general interest in the political situation in Russia. However, the connections between the power struggle in Moscow and the realities of the rest of the country remain weak. Even a detailed analysis of the political struggle in Moscow will not explain the new situation in Russia, where the political dimension has lost its traditional primacy.

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5. See David Remnick, "Yeltsin stands for Sanity Against a Dangerous Lunatic Fringe," in *International Herald Tribune* (October 7, 1993), p. 4.

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Today, even the severest critics cannot deny the Gaidar government's most important success in 1992: the launching of market reforms. It succeeded in freeing prices, encouraging private initiatives and taking the first steps toward the privatization of state property. Nikolai Shmelev has correctly pointed out that the Gaidar government's most significant success was the profound change in the people's mentality whereby "everybody, from the man on the street to the enterprise director to the bureaucrats, by now recognizes that there is no way back."[6] Longitudinal studies of changes in social values and attitudes of the Russian population conducted between 1990 and 1993 conclude that the changes in favor of the market economy, privatization and individual entrepreneurship are not superficial and accidental, but rather gradual and profound.[7] In spite of its contradictory and often negative impact on various strata of population, the deep economic transformation of 1992-93 did not bring about a revival of support for command economy. On the contrary, between 1990 and 1993 supporters of state regulation of prices and state redistribution have declined, while those approving privatization of state property and the development of private businesses has risen from 43% to 56% — all this despite the shock of the liberalization of prices and galloping inflation.[8]

The unexpected replacement of Prime Minister Gaidar with Chernomyrdin, which first appeared as a serious setback for Yeltsin and the whole course of economic reform showed instead that the new head of government, notwithstanding personal preferences, was forced to follow a political and economic course very similar to that of his predecessor. It is becoming increasingly evident that the government's options have been enormously reduced, that the country's crisis has a logic of its own and that there simply is no quick solution to the crisis.

The new politicians, who make up a good part of the Russian administration, are pragmatic and realistic. This can be seen in the statement by a high official in the Moscow province administration and the leader of the "Renewal" party, Antoli Dolgolaptev: "In the next 5-7 years, the life of a common man will be very difficult. Forget about the claim that all Russia needs is two years to solve its problems. How? Who will solve them? Certainly not the West. Life will be difficult . . . Let us admit it: the leap to marketizaton has failed. All that can be

6. *Novoe vremya*, No. 1 (1993, p. 19.
7. L. A. Khakhulina, "Tri goda ekonomicheskikh reform: izmeneniya v otsenkakh i mneniyakh naseleniya," *Public Opinion Monitor*, No.1, 1993, pp. 20-22.
8. Khakhulina, *op. cit.*, p. 20.

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done now is to creep to it."[9] The pragmatists' frustration with Yeltsin's optimistic promises to stop the decline of the standard of living within a year or two, curb inflation and begin the consolidation of the market economy is understandable. It is also clear, however, that a realistic appraisal of the situation, which promises an inevitable deterioration of the standard of living in the near future, cannot inspire popular enthusiasm and can hardly add to Yeltsin's popularity.

Polls by the Russian Center for the Study of Public Opinion indicate a significant transformation of popular attitudes. In the first year after the disintegration of the Soviet Union, the population often cited the "loss of prestige as a superpower" as significant. But when in a sampling of 20 Russian cities recent opinion polls asked the question: "What, according to you, could restore to Russia its superpower status?" it was discovered that there had been a surprising turnabout in public opinion. Not more than 11% of the respondents, mainly pensioners and officers, believed that Russia remains a superpower. On the other extreme of the spectrum there is a small group of about 4% who believed that Russia will never again be a superpower. Significantly, only about 4% of the respondents linked the restoration of superpower status to "strengthening of the army." A larger group, about 15%, placed its hopes in a new federation with Russia as the center: a kind of reconstitution of the Soviet Union. This group consisted of older people with little education and low income. In other words, they were people hurt by the loss of stability and afraid of the future. Particularly interesting is the emergence of a new solid majority: about 10% of the respondents believed that the precondition for Russia's return to great power status was its transformation into a liberal-democratic country, 17% counted on the success of economic reforms, and the largest group (30%) thought that the very term "superpower" was meaningless and that Russia really needed a decent standard of living rather than superpower status. One analyst has justifiably concluded that in Russian mass consciousness "the ideological symbol of greatness has been replaced by the pragmatic everyday longing for the 'good life'. . . . The wisdom of the society expresses itself, like never before, not in great illusions but in the good sense of a multitude of individuals."[10]

Of course public opinion is volatile and prone to rapid shifts as a result of everyday worries. Among such worries, preoccupations with the

9. *Komsomolskaya pravda* (January 28,1993), p. 2.
10. Yuri Levada, "Komu nuzhna mania velichia?" in *Izvestia* (January 23, 1993), p. 4.

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coming large scale unemployment and hyperinflation are the most prominent. These concerns are new to the Russian people. Thus growing employment instability caused by economic reforms has recently entered the list of the most salient popular preoccupations. According to surveys, throughout 1992 no more than 5% to 10% of the population was concerned about unemployment. By May 1993 this figure had increased to one third of the population and continues to grow.[11]

Inflation

Hyperinflation has also had a major impact on public attitudes toward reforms. From early 1992 the average monthly rate of inflation has remained at 20%, sometimes jumping up to 50% — the recognized benchmark of hyperinflation. According to official calculations, if the printing of money continues at the current rate, the indexes of prices for food and consumer goods by the beginning of 1994 will be 200 times higher than at the end of 1991, while the exchange rate of Russian currency, which at the time of the August 1991 *coup* was 30 rubles to the dollar, may reach 2000 rubles or even more. The budget deficit may rise to 20% to 25% of the gross national product. Inflation is a good indicator of the government's success in fulfilling its program, since the latter always proclaimed the containment of inflation among its top priorities. Thus a short analysis of the causes of inflation provides a useful starting point for understanding the origins of the deepening economic crisis.

First of all, it should be kept in mind that Russia inherited an incredibly high level of economic monopolization from the Stalinist system of centralized planning, which fostered the total domination of producers over consumers. The demise of central planning and the collapse of rigid state controls over prices resulted in monopolistic enterprises dictating arbitrarily high prices for their products. Thus today hyperinflation is fueled by the system of monopolistic prices combined with the inconvertibility of the ruble and uncertain legislation concerning property rights — all of which impede Russia's entrance in the world market, the only antidote to a monopolistic national economy.

Hyperinflation is also generated by the militarized structure of the Russian economy. After the first year of reform, of the 5,000 enterprises directly involved in the production of armaments only 12 had converted their production to civilian goods.[12] There was no reduction

11. See *Public Opinion Monitor*, No. 1 (1993), pp. 26-27.

12. E. Alexandrov, V. Kolbin, "Ekonomika strany pogrebena pod grudami oruzhiya" in *Izvestiya* (June 16, 1992), p. 3.

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of their labor force. On a smaller scale the Russian military-industrial complex continues to create "negative value" since the work of highly qualified personnel produces goods whose price on the world market is inferior to that of the raw materials and energy consumed in the production process. However, the connection between the role of the military-industrial complex and the pitiful state of the Russian economy is no longer unnoticed. In early 1993, when an enormously costly atomic submarine and a couple of new satellites were launched, the mass media began relating this news to the other major story of the day — the country's approaching hyperinflation.

Another cause of the growing inflation was the Gaidar government's failure to enforce a bankruptcy law, an important step towards a market economy. The enterprises most actively engaged in the "negative value" production were not forced either to rationalize their production or to shut down because of the combined resistance of enterprise directors, managers and workers. Ignoring bankruptcy laws, state enterprises continued to provide each other with credit and turn out their traditional products, regardless of market demands. The result has been a generalized reciprocal indebtedness among state enterprises, which made it impossible to distinguish potentially efficient and healthy ones from hopelessly unproductive ones. Consequently, the government was forced to cancel the reciprocal debts among state factories, while the Central Bank continued issuing enormous sums, adding to the inflationary spiral.

These conditions drive both state industries and the population to seek a safe haven by converting their savings into dollars and/or transferring them to Western banks. In the last two years, fifteen to twenty billion dollars have been siphoned out of Russia and deposited in the West. The method of exportation is relatively simple: having wrested from the center the right to participate directly in foreign trade, enterprises and regions began exporting the products, usually raw materials. The sale is reported at a lower price than the real one and only the reported sum is returned to Russia. The difference is divided between Western buyers and the managers of Russian industries, who leave their share in Western bank accounts. The government is now trying to impose stricter controls on dealings in hard currencies. The export of such huge sums is an obvious obstacle to the Russian leadership's hopes of getting serious financial aid from the West.

Western observes come away with the impression that loans and other forms of aid granted to Russia will almost immediately flow back

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to the West, without any positive impact on the Russian economy. Yet the export of capital to other countries is a particular form of privatization. "Nomenklatura privatization" or "political capitalism"[13] has already come to describe the phenomenon whereby people who occupied responsible positions in the old administrative structures use their contacts, information and power to assume control of a large part of state property on the way towards privatization. The exportation of capital from Russia signifies another form of private capital accumulation or political capitalism since most of the new proprietors have no intention of emigrating to the West and are waiting for an opportune moment to reinvest in the Russian economy.

Privatization.

With production in a free fall, the standard of living declining and the threat of hyperinflation, the government has no choice, regardless of ideology, but to accelerate privatization. This can be seen by analyzing the Russian economy from the viewpoint of a single state enterprise.

As is well known, all industries were subject to centralized planning, with the Moscow planners decreeing where, when, how and what should be produced, as well as setting wages, prices and the eventual destination of the products. After the collapse of central planning, enterprises kept producing their traditional products, maintaining the same workforce and the same relations with suppliers while continuing, as if by inertia, a reciprocal exchange of resources and materials. This happened despite the abandonment of state guaranteed financing and the adoption of a bankruptcy law. Paradoxically, even in the absence of state supports goods were delivered to other industries on credit. In a short period, everyone was in the red and had to be declared bankrupt. The Gaidar government had no alternative but to forgive the mutual debts between state enterprises. Here it is useful to examine why these industries collectively sabotaged the new bankruptcy law by examining two enterprises: one extractive and one manufacturing.

Extractive industries, especially energy producers, are at the beginning of the production cycle. They extract resources which they would prefer to sell on the world market at huge profits rather than supply industries inside Russia. All extractive industries, however, belong to the state, which exercises strict control over them. Workers in these industries

13. Jadwiga Staniszkis, *The Dynamics of the Breakthrough in Eastern Europe. The Polish Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), pp. 38-72.

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are conscious of their crucial role in earning hard currency for the state. Accordingly, as a result of strikes or the threat of strikes they have already obtained drastic wage increases and indexation to inflation. Currently, they are the most-privileged and best-organized group of the working class and wield considerable power. In June 1993 a two-week strike by Ukranian miners forced the Ukrainian government to capitulate and accept both the miners' economic and political demands.

The continuous decline of the extractive industries' output, therefore, is not caused by labor resistance. Consider the drastic fall in petroleum production. On the one hand, it is a consequence of the predatory production methods of the Brezhnev period, when Moscow pursued its oil-for-grain trade policies by imposing unrealistic output targets which encouraged inefficient methods of oil extraction such as pumping water under high pressure into oil deposits. On the other hand, the present decline is partially intentional, as oil industry managers and local politicians hold back production expecting future privatization or waiting for free-market prices to replace present political ones. The resulting shortages only accelerate inflation.

If state controls force extractive industries to supply raw materials at political prices, such is not the case with the manufacturing sector. Its directors realize that an active market policy could improve the situation of enterprises, as well wages and salaries. But they are in no position to take the necessary steps for rationalizing enterprises because of lack of authority and legitimacy with workers. As long as directors operate out of inertia, continuing their traditional activity and keeping the full workforce, they appear as the defenders of collective interests and have the workers' full support. But one of the main causes of low productivity and inefficiency in the Russian economy is the excess workforce of which, according to Shmelev, "at least a third is superfluous."[14] Rationalization of production and real market reforms are impossible if managers cannot reduce the labor force. But as soon as the directors begin dismissing employees, they encounter decisive labor resistance. Workers can readily remind directors that they were nominated to this position by a Communist party that no longer exists and by a functionary of some now defunct Soviet Ministry. "Why are *you* dismissing me and not vice versa?" Thus directors, who were part of a system that considered full employment a cornerstone of the economy seek at all costs to avoid this kind of confrontation.

14. Nikolai Shmelev in *Novoe vremya*, No. 1 (1993), p. 19.

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Privatization signifies not so much the change in the form of property as an attempt to create economic agents able to make difficult decisions and assume responsibility for their implementation. There are many plans for privatization — from the sale of small businesses to individuals or groups to the transfer of huge enterprises to collective workers' ownership. The problem is that the connection between privatization and the inevitable downsizing of the labor force is well known. Thus popular resistance to privatization is not surprising. An obvious example of this is the difficulty encountered by larger city governments in their attempts to transfer, free of charge, ownership of apartments from the state to tenants. The latter often refuse, afraid that as owners they will have to pay high property taxes and be responsible for repairs. The inertia of state-dependency continues to hound Russian society.[15]

The number of privatized businesses in Russia is still very small, especially when compared with their counterparts in Eastern Europe. Thus, the present situation can be seen as a continuous disintegration of the old economic edifice without a simultaneous creation of alternative structures. As a result, in 1992 alone prices increased seventeen times, while industrial output declined by 20%. The Chernomyrdin government has stated its commitment to stabilize the ruble by limiting the monthly printing of new money from the current 25%-30% of the total money supply to 7%-9%, to reduce the state budget deficit and to move more quickly towards privatization.

The success of privatization depends in large measure on the creation of a system of social security requiring at least partial indexation of pensions, the retraining of the workforce, a special fund to protect economically weak strata particularly hard hit by the transition and the creation of new jobs with massive public works programs. The task is very complicated for a country which for decades had no unemployment and actually enforced a law whereby any individual without state employment for more than three consecutive months could be classified a "social parasite" and sent to camps for "corrective labor."

An efficient system requires technical assistance and considerable Western financial aid. This may be possible if the government resolves its tensions with industrial countries — such as the payment of debts, the Russian arms trade and the problem of the Kurile Islands — and develops a convincing plan for economic reform that could be monitored by independent international organizations.

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15. Victor Zaslavsky, "Rossiya na puti k rynku: gosudarstvenno-zavisimye rabotniki i populism," *Polis* (Moscow), No. 5, (September-October 1991).

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Crisis and Stability

It should be emphasized that Russia has enjoyed an extraordinary internal stability. Notwithstanding the deterioration of the economic situation, almost no mass disorder, violent demonstrations or long strikes in Moscow have occurred to date. Characteristically, the October riot in Moscow has had no mass support, despite its leaders having had ample access to radio, newspapers and television. The reasons for such stability are much more significant than the proverbial Russian patience.

The hardships of transition are not equally distributed. The most active and enterprising sectors of the population did not find themselves worse off, but rather saw an improvement in their standard of living. Furthermore, many see the deterioration of the standard of living as a temporary phenomenon, amply compensated by the opening up of society, new possibilities for personal initiative and unprecedented freedoms. In addition, the situation in the provinces has improved with the disappearance of the central control that laid claim to enormous quantities of foodstuffs in the form of "obligatory deliveries." Today a "*revanche*" of the countryside against the city is taking place, something which has not happened since the Stalinist collectivization of the 1930s. In the Russian provinces there is a construction boom with private citizens building housing without any government authorization. As the Russian Minister of Culture has stated: "The province has ceased to live under the burden of instructions from the center. It has begun to breathe freely, is growing bolder, as cultural life is being reborn and new publications appear."[16] Finally, there are no longer any barriers between city and countryside, which previously prevented the migration of collective farmers to the city and prevented urban dwellers from buying property in the countryside. Although the *propiska* system (police control over the issuance of residence permits) remains in effect in most major Russian cities, it has been acknowledged as unconstitutional.

The wide distribution of plots of land to the urban population, started by Gorbachev and intensified under Yeltsin, is playing a significant role in mitigating economic hardships. These small private plots permit the population to rely increasingly on a subsistence economy — a phenomenon similar to the postwar situation in Germany or Italy after 1945. A bitter struggle developed around the dismantling of the collective farm system. The communist parliament desperately resisted laws allowing and regulating private ownership of land — laws that would spell death to collective farms. In the absence of such laws, municipal

16. *Moscow News* (May 14, 1993), p. 13.

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governments of large cities were unable to satisfy all of their citizens' requests for land, since large tracts were transferred, according to Stalinist law, to the collective farms for "use in perpetuity." This law has finally been passed and although it is not likely to bring about the immediate emergence of a large stratum of independent farmers, it will decisively change the situation in the countryside. Despite the continuing resistance to land reform, the right to resign from the collective, claiming a plot of land and some machinery in the process, was restored immediately after the suppression of the October riot. At the same time, millions of citizens were promised small plots that will allow families to get through the most difficult period of the transition.

Finally, the fall of industrial production must be seen in relation to the origins of the relative internal stability of the country. Industrial output in 1991 fell by 9%,[17] and by another 20% in 1992. Normally, the loss of nearly a third of the industrial output in only two years would have a destructive effect on a country. But the peculiarity of the Russian case lies precisely in the fact that the fall of production (except for the energy sector) is often irrelevant to the population's standard of living. One of the sectors which suffered the highest decline following the disintegration of the Soviet Union was the military-industrial complex. The loss of military enterprises in the Ukraine, Estonia, Kazakhistan and elsewhere disrupted the complex which had been a unitary whole whose interdependent elements were scattered among the various republics throughout the Soviet Union. Meanwhile, in Russia itself the central government is no longer able to provide the necessary investments for military industries. The status of military research funding is particularly revealing: "The system of guaranteed support that established military might and technological prowess during the Cold War has virtually collapsed . . . Worst off are the scientific institutes that did a high proportion of defense work; according to one estimate, military research was cut by 80% between 1991 and 1992."[18]

Furthermore, the disintegration of the USSR and the need to regulate financial relations among republics (especially the distribution of debts accumulated by the former Soviet Union) have resulted in the publication

17. *Narodnoe khozyaistvo Rossijskoj federatsii. 1992 god.* (Moscow: Goskomstat Rossii, 1992), p. 13.

18. Tim Beardsley, "Selling to Survive," *Scientific American* (February 1993, pp. 93-94. Characteristically, in summer 1993 two major nuclear weapons development centers, Arzamas-16 and Chelyabinsk-70 declared that they had not been able to pay their personnel for a few months and issued strike warnings.

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of a mass of secret documents. These documents have destroyed the myth of the competitiveness of the military-industrial complex and the profitability of arms trade. The Russian population now knows that immense quantities of arms were supplied to Syria, Libya, Iraq, India and other Third World countries on credit. While the successor states of the former USSR are responsible for $80 billion of Western loans, almost the same amount was disbursed by the Soviet Union in the form of armament "purchases" on the part of Third World Countries that will never be repaid. A popular Moscow journal published a list of recipients of Soviet weapons and equipment during the past decade, emphasizing that the nominal value of the sales amounted to over $121 billion, but only 10% of this sum was actually paid to the USSR. The rest was given in the form of "fraternal aid" or long-term interest-free loans.[19] Unsuccessful attempts by the government to sell these debts at 10% to 15% of their nominal price have also been discussed in the Russian press.

According to Almquist, by the mid-1993 "the defense industry of the former Soviet Union has collapsed. While individual factories and organizations continue to exist, the unifying leadership, special status and priority access to resources that the defense sector formerly enjoyed have been partially or completely dismantled."[20] This collapse was not a result of some consistent conversion policy. Rather, it happened by default, since the central government's financing dried up. "Defense industry managers have shown themselves incapable of dealing adequately with the new economic environment and the opportunities presented them. They have waited too long to move aggressively into the manufacturing of new product lines, in the expectation that the state would intervene and provide financial support. They have demonstrated an almost equal lack of skill in the areas of product marketing, prices, and so on."[21]

The enormous decline of industrial production should not be seen solely as a negative factor leading to a reduction of the general standard of living. Since the military-industrial complex contributed disproportionately to the decline in the gross national product, many economists consider it part of a healthy restructuring of the Russian economy. It reduces the waste of raw materials and energy because it reduces the production of goods for which there is no internal or foreign demand.

19. *Novoe vremya*, No. 17 (1993).

20. Peter Almquist, "Arms Producers Struggle to Survive as Defense Orders Shrink," in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 25 (1993), pp. 40-41.

21. Erick Whitlock, "Defense Conversion and Privatization in St.Petersburg," in *RFE/RL Research Report*, Vol. 2, No. 24, (1993), p. 22.

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Western and Russian Alarmism

If such is the case, why are there so many gloomy forecasts in the mass media threatening mass famine, the eventual collapse of the transportation network, the disruption of energy supplies and, more generally, a general catastrophe? The authors of these forecasts generally belong to one of two groups. The first includes Western correspondents, travelers and observers, especially those who never directly experienced daily life in the USSR during the previous decades. These people were never aware of the standard of living of the majority of the Soviet population, outside large cities accessible to foreigners during the Khrushchev and Brezhnev regimes. This group is particularly struck by the absurdity of the citizens of the country with the richest natural resources in the world, a producer of advanced technology and sophisticated armaments, suffering from a permanent shortage of basic foodstuffs and consumer goods. Consumption of meat, milk, fish, and eggs in the largest cities has declined, down to early 1970's levels. Yet a balanced appraisal would require comparison with the historical experience of the Soviet population. As has been recently pointed out, "the evidence we are getting [from the Soviet archives] suggests strongly that conditions inside the USSR, not just under Stalin but also under Lenin and several of Stalin's successors were worse than most outside experts on that country had ever suspected."[22] The serious situation of today's pensioners must be seen from the perspective of recent Soviet history; the level of pensions for the millions who worked on collective farms, even during Brezhnev's time, equalled a third of the officially defined "poverty level." For the weak strata of the Soviet population there was never a golden age.

The second group forecasting economic catastrophe and the disintegration of the Russian federation, or Russia's inevitable evolution towards a new fascism are the members of the Russian state-dependent intelligentsia. The fate of this specific group, an important part of traditional Russian society, deserves special study beyond the scope of the present article. This group now faces a drastic reduction of demand for its services and is threatened by mass unemployment: "The old state that needed a whole army of functionaries and professionals — accountants and editors, administrative and scientific specialists, librarians, philologists, teachers, social scientists, writers,

22. John Lewis Gaddis, "The Tragedy of Cold War History," *Diplomatic History*, Vol. 17, No.1 (1993), p. 7.

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journalists, etc. — is falling apart. Its treasury has no means for maintaining libraries, museums, publishing houses, universities and all of their employees. Tens and hundreds of thousands of people with higher education have become expendable. Often poorly prepared, deskilled, passive, not ready for painful retraining, the majority of them are doomed to degradation and impoverishment, since they stand no chance to adapt to the new conditions."[23]

This is nothing more than the collapse of a state-dependent culture. The Soviet state maintained a large number of organizations for the production and diffusion of culture, intended to support the legitimacy and stability of the single-party regime. The most striking example of this policy consists of so-called "creative unions" (writers, architects, film-makers, artists, journalists, etc.). These unions counted tens of thousands of members and were generously financed by the state. Already under Gorbachev, the economic crisis and the enormous overproduction of intellectuals made it difficult for the state to support all these cultural employees. With the collapse of the Soviet Union all these structures literally disintegrated within a few months. A rapid process of differentiation of the old Soviet intelligentsia is underway. A core of well-prepared professionals and intellectuals, a real intellectual elite capable of competing internationally, has risen from a grey mass of "intellectual workers" who served Soviet society, but they are still unable to adapt to the new conditions. Thus it is understandable why the level of anxiety among university-educated people is considerably higher than that of other social groups. This gap is particularly pronounced among the inhabitants of the formerly privileged closed cities where the proportion of intellectuals has always been high. The intelligentsia pours out its fears, tensions, and visions of imminent catastrophes in the pages of newspapers and in the television screens whether in Russia or in the West, exerting considerable influence on public opinion. This is the well-know phenomenon, in which a group about to disappear involuntarily from the historical scene identifies its own demise with the end of society in general.

Comparisons between Russia and the Weimar Republic have become commonplace in alarmist articles which insist on the growing danger of fascism, of a new rightist *coup*, or of a military dictatorship. Now that citizens are enjoying the greatest freedom of speech, press, assembly, and information exchange in all Russian history, there are a multiplicity

23. Lev Gudkov, "Intelligenty i intellectualy," *Znamya*, No. 3-4 (1992), p. 203.

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of groups and publishing houses which perpetuate xenophobic propaganda, anti-Semitism, and Nazism. 1992 alone saw the emergence of about ten anti-Semitic organizations with the already well-known name "Pamyat" (Memory) and a number of parties claiming to be the rightful heirs of the old Stalinist party. These two ostensibly opposite ends of the political spectrum are united by a number of common goals and policies, above all hatred of the West, democracy and of the market economy. The dissolution of some extremist groups and parties and the banning of their publications after the Moscow riot has been long overdue. Such organizations and publications inciting racial and ethnic hatred, especially anti-Semitism, and calling for armed rebellion against the democratically elected president would never be tolerated in any democracy.

The main differences between the crisis of Weimar and the current crisis in Russia are in the international and internal situation of Russia today. From the viewpoint of international relations, the Nazis rise to power immediately destabilized a Europe which had already been shaken by a profound economic crisis. The ascendancy of an authoritarian or openly fascist regime in Russia would hardly have analogous globally destabilizing consequences. No dictatorial regime could reverse the fall of the Russian standard of living, while any attempt to restore the Soviet empire would plunge the regime into numerous local wars with adjacent republics. Even more important is the difference in the internal situation. In Weimar Germany a group of active young people was most acutely struck by the crisis, unemployment and the impossibility of securing a reasonable position. It is this group which supported the Nazi drive for power. In the Russian case, young people find themselves in a relatively advantageous situation after the collapse of the gerontocratic regime. Today it is they who are the major beneficiaries of private initiative, who support market reform and are not burdened with memories of the defunct Soviet empire or preoccupied with the loss of superpower status. Today the ideals of a "decent life," success, re-entering the world community of developed countries, democracy and anti-militarism prevail in this important group.

Yeltsin's Agenda

The adoption of a new constitution and the transformation of Russia into a presidential republic remain Yeltsin's two major political priorities, which in all likelihood will be realized in the near future. A new constitution is necessary to put an end to the paralyzing and destructive

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conflict between the executive and the legislative branches, and to codify their interaction at the federal level. It will also alleviate spontaneous unregulated conflicts between the center and the regions that have plagued the Russian federation practically since the *coup*. Finally, the new constitution will allow a rapid transfer of power from the dysfunctional soviets, a dangerous legacy of the Soviet regime, to democratically-elected municipal governments.

Yeltsin's draft of the new constitution, presented to the Constitutional Assembly convened after the referendum, prefigures the shift from parliamentarism to presidentialism. The all-but-certain introduction of a presidential republic may be a mixed blessing for Russia. On the one hand, the historical experience, especially in Latin America, indicates that presidentialism rarely produces a system of checks and balances, and hence may prove dangerous for a young democracy. The political will and convictions of the president and his circle of advisors may become too important a factor in the success or failure of the democratic transition. The periodically resurfacing rumors about Yeltsin's poor health, in the absence of an obvious successor with firm democratic convictions, underscore the dangers of presidentialism in today's Russia. On the other hand, recent Russian experience has shown that a total lack of the parliamentary tradition made the parliament's operation in Russia inefficient and, on balance, counterproductive. In a stable democratic society, parliamentarism can successfully articulate and reconcile the social interests of various groups. At this point, however, Russia finds itself in the throes of turbulent historic reforms that are best implemented within an efficient presidential system. A government responsible to the president rather than parliament will be in a better position to carry out policies driven by contradictory demands, such as striking a balance between protectionism aimed at promoting new Russian entrepreneurs in competition with established Western firms, and an open-door policy of granting Western firms freer access to the Russian market to counteract the reigning monopolies.

Moreover, the Russian transition is complicated by ongoing ethnic conflicts as one of the most dangerous legacies of the Soviet regime. The Russian attempt to curb inflation by forcing Soviet successor states to stop using the ruble and to move to their own currencies prompted such an unpopular measure as the August 1993 currency reform, which hit many strata of the Russian population and resulted both in a considerable loss of popularity and prestige for the president and the government and in a new confrontation between legislative and executive

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powers. The ethnic restructuring of post-Soviet societies is a complex process that may affect economic and democratic transition in unpredictable ways. In this respect, a presidential republic seems better suited than a parliamentary one to deal with former Soviet republics and with ethno-regional groups within Russia claiming sovereign state status and to promote some form of federalism based on regional power rather than on exclusive rights of ethno-territorial groups.[24]

Having dissolved the conservative parliament and crushed an armed rebellion by hard-liners, Yeltsin removed all references to the sovereignty of ethno-territorial regions and republics from a new draft of the constitution.[25] These references were included in all previous drafts at the demand of local political elites of such republics as Tatarstan and Bashkortosian seeking to extend their influence while the central executive power was bogged down in a conflict with the defiant parliament. In fact, such sovereignty claims did not represent any genuine mass movement for self-rule or independence but a consistent attempt on the part of local elites to expand and consolidate their feuds inherited from the Soviet state. These provisionally ethno-territorial power-sharing arrangements were extremely dangerous for Russia's fledgling federalism. The abortive October rebellion and the ensuing revolutionary transformation of Russia's institutional structure have given Yeltsin's government a long-awaited pretext to call the bluff of local elites exposing the groundlessness of their pretense of having considerable popular support and to scrap those dangerous arrangements. In the same vein, the divisive and anti-federalist institution of double citizenship (republican and Russian federation citizenships) for the inhabitants of ethno-territorial units has also been eliminated from the constitution.

Desirable in themselves, constitutional guarantees do not necessarily prevent abuses of political power. Similarly, the predominance of the executive branch does not mean a presidential monopoly on power. Regular elections and the establishment of political parties will reinforce and implement whatever system of checks and balances is finally included in the constitution. The adoption of the presidential republic appears imminent, since regional authorities originally benefiting from the conflict between the executive and the legislative powers in the center now realize that such a conflict cannot be tolerated much longer. Having achieved considerable administrative independence and obtained, in

24. See Frederick Johnstone, "Quebekers, Mohawks and Zulus: Liberal Federalism and Fair Trade," in *Telos* 93 (Fall 1992).

25. *Izvestiya* (October 23, 1993).

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Yeltsin's words, "as much power as they can manage," local administrations increasingly realize that without central coordination their goals of stabilizing and developing the local economy, attracting foreign investment and entering the international market will be extremely difficult.

Conclusions

Unlike in many other former Soviet republics, in Russia representative democracy appears to have won its first battles. Organized democratically, elections and referenda have attracted mass participation while the army, the police and other coercive agencies have kept a low political profile. In contrast to the recent past, human rights now are guaranteed. The political system is gradually developing all the necesary organs and institutions of democracy. So far the president and his advisors have resisted the temptation to proclaim emergency rule and introduce censorship. They rely on compromise with the country's major political forces and attempt to maintain democratic procedures, engendering hopes that the expected transition from parliamentarism to presidentialism will not bring what many predicted would be an "iron hand rule."[26] Only those organized groups that have been involved in the October 1993 armed insurrection were banned. Ten political bosses and seven parties, including the Communist Party, are now presenting their candidates in the December 1993 elections, provided they can collect 100,000 signatures to be eligible to participate.

The major battles of the nascent Russian democracy still lie ahead. It is widely believed that democracy in Russia is premature since its social base, the middle class, is only emerging; that democracy is unstable since it appeared before the market and private property; and that democracy will fail because no democratic government has ever faced the introduction of radical privatization and market reforms as its major tasks. Russian democrats are torn between the desire to participate directly in the reforms and the impulse to oppose the reformist government on the grounds that the coming privatization will inevitably entail rapid social differentiation and unemployment.[27]

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26. See Igor Kliamkin and Andranik Migranivan in *Literaturnaya gazeta* (December 27, 1989), p. 10. See also Ewa Bérard-Zarzika, "The Authoritarian *Perestroika* Debate" and Andranik Migranian, Igor Kliamkin and Irina Zorina, "An Authoritarian *Perestroika*?" both in *Telos* 84 (Summer 1990), pp. 115-141.

27. As a philosopher recently put it, "logically speaking, those sincerely devoted to democracy should not even strive for power under these conditions." See V. M. Mezhuev,"Kuda dvizhetsya Rossiya?" in *Voprosy filosofii*, No. 4 (1993), p. 5. See also Gavriil Popov, "Avgust devyanosto pervogo," in *Izvestia* (August 21, 1992), pp. 24-26.

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For decades there has been a heated debate over the future of democracy and the prospects for democratic transition between the so-called "school of structural pessimism" and the "school of wilful optimism." A decade ago, Samuel Huntington, the major proponent of "structural pessimism," analyzed the prospects for world-wide democracy and concluded that "with a few exceptions, the limits of democratic development in the world may well have been reached."[28] Writing after the demise of communism in Eastern Europe, Ken Jowitt concurs that, as a result of the extinction of communism, the world faces "a period of global, regional, and national turmoil over boundaries and identities"[29] and that the chances of a successful democratic transition in post-communist societies are minimal. Examples of failed democratic transitions supporting this position are too numerous to mention.

While aware of the powerful institutional and sociocultural factors obstructing the road to democracy, the "school of wilfull optimism" insists that democratization is ultimately a matter of political crafting or, as Di Palma put it, "democracies can be made (or unmade) in the act of making them."[30] According to this school, democratic theory circumscribed by a long list of structural preconditions and prerequisites for democratic transition may prove overly pessimistic for two reasons. It confuses the system-building stage with system-maintenance and imposes the characteristics of stable democratic regimes as prerequisites on democracies in the making. And it is counterproductive, since it places limits on human creativity, defies the open-endedness of transition processes and discourages democratic action. This school points to the Spanish, Portuguese or Greek cases for support.[31]

These two approaches are not necessarily contradictory. In all likelihood, the Russian case will prove an ideal testing ground for weighing the role of structural conditions against the wills and skills of political actors in bringing about democracy. So far Russia has made considerable progress towards representative democracy. If one is not inclined to abandon a structurally rooted theory, however, an attempt to explain

28. Samuel Huntington, "Will More Countries Become Democratic?" in *Political Science Quarterly*, No. 99 (Summer 1984), p. 218.

29. Ken Jowitt, *New World Disorder. The Leninist Extinction* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1992), p. 328.

30. Juan Linz and Alfred Stepan, as quoted in Giuseppe Di Palma, *To Craft Democracies. An Essay on Democratic Transitions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1990), pp. 3-8.

31. Occasionally counter examples, intended to emphasize the pivotal role of determined political actors, are also pressed into service: for instance, the success of the Bolsheviks, whose chances to seize and especially maintain power would have been rated minimal before the October revolution by any group of structurally-minded scholars.

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this development will necessarily lead to a reconsideration and reevaluation of the legacy of Soviet development. To date, the Russian experience does not seem to have deviated markedly from the evolutionary experience of Western-style democracies. Conditions for successful transition to a Western-style democracy have been identified as follows: "1) economic prosperity and equality; 2) a modern and diversified social structure in which nondependent middle classes occupy center stage; and 3) a national culture that, by tolerating diversity and preferring accomodation, is already implicitly democratic."[32]

These prerequisites appear to be weak or even absent in today's Russia. An influential Russian journal has recently published an anonymous memorandum that, according to the editors, "has been widely circulated in the uppermost echelons of the American establishment." This document, whatever its origin, concisely summarizes the commonsensical objections to the very possibility of Russian democratization. It claims that US policy towards Russia is based on fundamentally flawed premises: that "an imperial giant with an authoritarian political culture and a totally militarized economy is, unlike postwar Japan or Germany, assumed capable of self-transformation into a modern democracy"; that the population and political elite of Russia "may somehow come to an immediate consensus on the desirability of democracy amidst the collapse of an authoritarian civilization"; that "Russia's current anti-authoritarian leadership, although completely lacking any experience in democratic politics, is somehow capable of working out an elaborate political strategy of self-transformation"; etc.[33]

While analyzing an analogous situation in his inquiry into the preconditions of industrialization, Gerschenkron proposed the notion of "specific substitutions" for the missing or inadequately available prerequisites and demonstrated that "the degree of backwardness of the individual areas is the dominant factor determining the nature of substitutions that have taken place."[34] A pattern of substitutions for the

32. Di Palma, *op. cit.*, p. 3.

33. In stark contrast to the list of obvious obstacles to Russian democratization, the authors of this memorandum propose to launch a democratic counteroffensive by subsidizing "the construction in the heart of the country of two or three supermodern megacities built for the alienated refugees from the neighbouring republics, for demobilized soldiers, for all the homeless and desperate of Russia." See "How to Secure Russian Democracy," in *New Times International*, No. 23 (1993), p. 26.

34. Alexander Gerschenkron, *Europe in the Russian Mirror. Four Lectures in Economic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 103. See also Alexander Gerschenkron, *Economic Backwardness in Historical Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1962), pp. 5-151.

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unavailable or inadequately developed preconditions for democratization can be glimpsed in the Russian situation. Economic prosperity has no place in today's Russia, but the abundance of natural resources and well-developed extractive industries may allow the reformist leadership to prevent the general standard of living from dropping below a certain acceptable level. Consequently, Russian domestic prices for energy remain far below world market prices. In mid-1993 oil, gas and coal were sold domestically for 15%, 5%, and 4% of world prices respectively. Russian natural resources rather than Western aid can readily subsidize the country's internal stability during the transition.

An independent middle class, the major pillar of Western democracy, is emerging in Russia, but it remains merely a *potential* social force. The transition simultaneously intensified two diametrically opposed trends: the formation of a new middle class and the "lumpenization" of Russian society.[35] What should be taken into account is that the Soviet educational infrastructure not only guaranteed universal literacy and a relatively high level of competence within the population, but also provided vast strata with both generic and specialized training essential for the functioning of industrial society. Obviously Russia has not yet acquired a Western-type "professional society"[36] with the rivalry between public and private sector professions, but it already has a "knowledge class." When knowledge, next to capital or natural resources, is the basic economic resource,[37] this class may represent a temporary substitution for the nascent middle class.

Finally, traditional Russian political culture is hardly conducive to a democratic transition. Jowitt correctly points out that a Leninist political culture, which favors an authoritarian rather than a liberal democratic way of life, has outlived the Leninist regimes.[38] But again, the explosive growth of mass communications and the newly found freedom of travel (with the number of Russian citizens traveling abroad approaching 10 million a year and exceeding that of foreign tourists visiting Russia), are diminishing the role of traditional culture. Today's Russian youth is thoroughly Westernized. Global Western culture, with its emphasis on democracy, human rights and individual freedoms, is becoming a viable

35. E. Starikov,"Ugrozhaet li nam poyavlenie 'srednego klassa'?" in *Znamya*, No. 10 (1990).
36. Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society. England Since 1880* (London: Routledge, 1989).
37. Peter Drucker, *Post-Capitalist Society* New York: Harper Collins, 1993).
38. Jowitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 284-294.

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substitution for the traditional political culture in several crucial groups. After the collapse of the Soviet regime, Russian political development and the transformation of the state have been guided not only by the internal configuration of interests but also by the increasingly accessible external environment of the larger world system.

Under these conditions, the old problem of the role of the state in the development of capitalism and modern industrial society is destined to resurface. In Russia and the West there is no lack of nostalgia for the strong central state which this time should foster the development of capitalism rather than the construction of socialism. It is only a matter of time before there will be a revamping of the thesis that late modernization within an established world capitalist system can be accomplished only by a strong central state.[39] The Chinese experience will be cited as an example of a vastly more successful strategy of transition than the Russian. An analogy between Russia and China or other Third World countries, however, is misleading for at least one crucial reason. As it has been pointed out, "the greatest deficiency of both modernization theory and dependency theory is their failure to deal with the distinctive demographic features of Third World societies. Historically no society has ever successfully industrialized while burdened with anything approaching the rate of population growth obtaining in most of these societies today."[40] Russia has already attained zero population growth and does not need a strong central government whose major modernizing task would consist of curbing an explosive population growth. Thus it has a much better chance of following the European path of development.

In his work on the genesis of capitalism in Europe, Luciano Pellicani has highlighted the crucial role of political freedom as an essential precondition for capitalist development.[41] In today's Russia, after the decline of the dominant central state, the role of cities, provinces and ethnoregional units has grown dramatically. Their local governments emerge as new centers of power often instrumental to the development

39. In fact, it has already been suggested that "the protective shield of 'communism' might better foster economic development than the Western-inspired Russian strategy of casting aside all trade barriers" and even that "the conditions for the transition from merchant capital to modern capitalism" are probably less propitious than those "from state socialism to democratic socialism." See Michael Burawoy and Pavel Krotov, "The Economic Basis of Russia's Political Crisis," in *New Left Review*, No. 193 (1993), pp. 67-69.

40. Gerhard Lenski, Jean Lenski and Patrick Nolan, *Human Societies. An Introduction to Macrosociology*, 6th edition (New York: McGraw Hill, 1991), p. 400.

41. Luciano Pellicani, "On the Genesis of Capitalism," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88); and his *The Genesis of Capitalism and the Origins of Modernity* (New York, Telos Press, 1994).

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of personal initiative, privatization, trade activities and legal protection of private property. As a Russian analyst put it, "largely independent of the state, Russian society is now entering the stage of self-organization."[42] Yeltsins leadership is consciously supporting this trend. Having dissolved the soviets, Yeltsin issued a decree ordering elections to new-style local parliaments in all Russian provinces to be held before March 1994 and recommending Russia's ethno-territorial regions follow suit. These future regional parliaments are supposed to become true centers of local government with vast powers; they will even have the right to pass laws, provided they do not conflict with federal laws, government orders or presidential decrees. The Russian reforms are less than two years old. This is still the very beginning of Russia's catch-up modernization and it remains to be seen whether it will be only a brief spell of political freedom before the center regains its dominant position or Russian society advances to some sort of federalism.

Today the experience of Western democracies is closely watched and often tested against Russian reality. The exchange of people and information is open and unhindered as never before. In the past, the main effect of the Western example on communist regimes consisted of the continuing "pressures that Western material standards placed on the institutions and stability of these regimes."[43] Demonstration effects are becoming increasingly important since they provide not only models of political and economic institutions but also some very attractive examples of successful transitions to democracy and to an economy fully integrated into the world market. An active promotion of democracy on the part of the advanced countries, such as the European Community requirement that a democratic regime is a necessary condition of membership, plays an important role in strengthening democratic trends in Russia. Finally, the absence of realistic alternatives to a market economy and democratic transition after the collapse of the Leninist model remains probably the most powerful argument in favor of democracy. The disintegration of the Soviet system represents a unique historical event: a superpower dissolved because of strictly internal causes or, from another perspective, "the Soviet system suffered a crushing military defeat in peace time."[44]

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42. Andrej Bystritsky, "Kholodnoe leto 93-go," in *Literaturnaya Gazeta* (July 14, 1993), p. 2.

43. Andrew Janos, *Politics and Paradigms. Changing Theories of Change in Social Science* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1986), p. 121.

44. Yuri Chernichenko, "Voenno-morskaya lyubov' po-presidentski," in *Literator*, No. 11 (March 1991, p. 1.

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This defeat created a very peculiar socio-psychological climate. The older generations feel discredited and the leading role has suddenly passed to younger generations committed to the global industrial culture and hostile to utopian dreams. The quip attributed to the Czech Prime Minister Vaclav Klaus that the Third Way ends up in the Third World has become very popular among young Russian intellectuals. If a relatively stable democracy remains the norm of social life, and if the transition to a market economy proves to be on the whole successful, Russia may open a new chapter in the history of democratic development.

new german critique

Number 59 Spring-Summer 1993

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Buying Intellectual Pre-Fabs

Gabor T. Rittersporn

Victor Zaslavsky has made an outstanding contribution to the understanding of the Soviet system.[1] The strength and originality of his analyses lay in his ability to avoid applying concepts derived from the Soviet regime's self-image as well as from the way they used to be recycled by Western "Kremlinologists," most of whom had been excelling in echoing the official propaganda's most outlandish claims.[2] This is why it is distressing to see Zaslavsky succumbing to the conventions of a "Sovietology" seeking its truisms by contrasting the Kremlin's apologies for its policies with everything tenured academics are expected to praise in this, the best of all possible worlds.

A drawback of this sort of exercise is that it leads its practitioners into seeing phenomena behind facts, trends and data manifestly absent from pedestrian realities. Thus, e.g., Zaslavsky should have a closer look at the results of this spring's referendum in Russia before praising them so much. Far from having been "won by a surprisingly wide margin" as he thinks, the plebiscite showed the precariousness of the support for the new regime. If 58.7% of those who took the pains to vote expressed confidence in Yeltsin, they constituted only 37.7% of the electorate. 53% of the participants approved the reformers' social

1. For an appraisal of his work, see "Review-Symposium on Soviet-type Societies," in *Telos* 60 (Summer 1984), pp. 155-191.

2. Some of these problems are discussed in Gabor T. Rittersporn, *Stalinist Simplifications and Soviet Complications: Social Tensions and Political Conflicts in the USSR, 1933- 1953* (Philadelphia: Harwood Academic Publishers, 1991), pp. 1-29, 170-1, 219-221, 229-231, and 286-300; and "Nouvelles Recherches, Vieux Problèmes," in *Revue des Études Slaves*, No. 1 (1992), pp. 9-19 and 24-25.

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and economic policies, which amounts to barely 34% of those entitled to vote. At the same time, 49.5% of people showing up at the polling stations thought it necessary to have presidential elections before Yeltsin's term expires, which makes out 31.7% of the eligible voters, i.e. far more than those who voiced their dissatisfaction with Yeltsin (39.2% of those having voted and 25.2% of the electorate) and almost as many as the people supporting reformist policies. Russian citizens seem pretty uncertain as to the merits of the new regime and their vote for its choices may have to do with the fact that they are not closer to seeing an alternative to the existing order than in the old days. The only feature of the referendum Zaslavsky has some reason to wax ecstatic about is that 64.5% of the electorate did not shun the polls[3] — although even this circumstance reveals more of the things he is unwilling to notice than of the promising future he makes his best to discern.

In July 1992, in a district of the Moscow region, less then 30% of people with voting rights took the trouble to participate in elections for a vacant seat in the Russian parliament.[4] The vote took place before most of the great battles that polarized the conflict between the legislature and the president, so that the high rate of abstention cannot be understood as a support for the latter. This is all the more so, since a couple of weeks after the referendum whose turnout makes Zaslavsky so confident, the elections of Vladivostok's mayor — the third such event, after Moscow and Leningrad (as St. Petersburg was called at the time) — did not mobilize more then 32.7% of registered voters.[5] Thus the referendum's results should dishearten rather than reassure those who, like Zaslavsky, wish to see the blessings of democracy in Russia. After all, people who do not feel particularly motivated to choose politicians representing them in parliament or deciding local issues seem to have hardly any illusions about the defense of their interests by officeholders and to consider elections and everything they imply irrelevant. Their relatively high rate of participation in a referendum on nationwide issues may signify the survival of of traditional attitudes toward politics and authority — "those in Moscow must know it better . . ." — whereas the moderate share in the electorate endorsing Yeltsin and the policies he stands for as well as the willingness of the voters to choose a new president indicate a fair degree of distrust in the regime's course.

3. The results of the referendum are taken from "Resultaty Tsentral'noi kommissii vserossiiskogo referenduma," *in Rossiiskaia gazeta* (May 6, 1993), p. 1.

4. V. V. Cherviakov, "Novaia partnomenklatura?" in *Sotsiologicheskie issledovaniia*, No. 11 (1992), p. 65.

5. N. Ostrovskaia, "Griaznoe delo," in *Vostok Rossii*, No. 27 (1993), p. 7.

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According to reports about the Vladivostok elections, the low turnout was due to the timing of the vote which took place in late June. This is when people are busy attending the small land allotments to which Zaslavsky attributes the resilience of the masses in the wake of falling standards of living. If this happens to be the case, then he is wrong to assume that the referendum's voters refused to follow their instincts dictated by "consumer materialism" and sided with the regime (what they did not do as unambiguously as he claims) "on the understanding that their basic interests would be better protected by a market society." Far from it! The referendum was planned in April when it was too early to work on household plots (which have nothing to do with the market, representing as they are a survival economy). It is revealing that Zaslavsky was among the few "Sovietologists" to criticize the cynicism of the old regime in using such plots to disburden itself of responsibility to supply the countryside with badly needed food products and to squeeze extra labor out of the peasantry,[6] something which does not seem to disturb him too much today when the bulk of Russia's population is reduced to imitating the "peasants' art of starving."

One may wonder how long Russians must make up for what they cannot afford to buy on the much celebrated market by investing their leisure-time and considerable energy in trying to feed themselves. It must be noted however that, despite the liberalization of prices, controls did not disappear altogether as far as agricultural goods are concerned, so that many of them are simply not worth producing. In the course of 1992, prices for agricultural machinery and services rose by a factor of 16 against only 6 as to those of products of animal husbandry.[7] In such a context, Zaslavsky is mistaken to claim that the uncertainty of the legal status of landed property is the main obstacle to private farming. The legal status of the bulk of other private ventures is by no means more settled, but this state of affairs does not prevent the flourishing of a multitude of commercial enterprises. The fact that less than 1% of agricultural production came from private farming as of the beginning of the year[8] had much less to do with landed property than with the traditional

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6. See the introduction Zaslavsky wrote with Armando Pitassio to Lev Timofeev's *Soviet Peasants: The Peasants' Art of Starving* (New York: Telos Press, 1985). About 70% of the products of these plots was consumed by the peasants themselves. See Basile Kerblay, *La Société Soviétique Contemporaine* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1977) pp. 89-90.

7. A. Shut'kov, "Ekhali k Fome — zaekhali k kume," in *Sel'skaia zhizn'* (August 3, 1993), p. 1.

8. G. Kurganov, "Itogi pergovo goda reform i predlozheniia po stabilizatsii ekonomiki," in *Ekonomika*, No. 3 (1993), p. 39.

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dilemma of price policy that the new regime is no more successful in resolving than its predecessor. It is impossible to allow food prices to rise beyond a certain level if a modicum of social peace is to be maintained, whereas the prices of implements farmers need outstrip everything they can earn. The problem is as old as the Soviet system[9] (if not older) and does not make farming profitable, whether private or not. Similarly, in order to take off, private farming needs heavy investments ranging from a wide variety of equipment to the reconstruction of infrastructures adapted to the *kolkhoz* system. Even if loans were available, few people seem ready to risk going bankrupt because of the regime's price policy.

Zaslavsky may also be suspected of confusing wishes with reality when he claims that the bulk of the fall in industrial production occurred because of the closure of plants wasting materials and energy on military production. Industrial production as a whole decreased by 18.8% in the course of 1992, but that of tractors fell by 23%, harvesting machines by 24%, different sorts of sophisticated machine tools between one third and one half, and the regression affected branches as far removed from war industries as the manufacture of textiles and shoes.[10] The situation stabilized by spring 1993, and there was even a growth of some 3% in April and May. Artificial measures to contain unemployment and to keep afloat insolvent enterprises by distributing new credits[11] do not suggest that improvements are in sight, whatever happens to the armaments sector. Interestingly enough, Zaslavsky proposes pretty much what the Russian authorities are already doing anyway, namely the creation of a social security system, partial indexation of pensions, a special fund to protect the economically weak and the setting up of public works programs. In the Kremlin's view, most of this can be done through deficit spending, supporting bankrupt enterprises and periodically raising pensions and other subsidies. Attempts to retrain the labor force, as Zaslavsky suggests, are beyond the regime's means and may prove completely counterproductive. It is difficult to forecast the skills the workforce would need in the wake of an industrial reconstruction whose contours are impossible to predict.

To be sure, something should be done when 28% of the population is below the officially established poverty level and when the bulk of

9. Alec Nove, *An Economic History of the USSR* (Harmdsworth: Penguin, 1772), pp. 93ff.
10. Kurganov, *op. cit.*, pp. 26-7.
11. V. Zadorin, "Rossia. Neuzheli eshche raz sorvemsia?" in *Vostok Rossii*, No. 27 (1993), p. 6.

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the citizens' income must be spent on food.[12] But Russians should not fret for, as Zaslavsky points out, they were toughened by the hardship the Soviet people had to endure under the old regime. Moreover, as indicated by the opinion polls Zaslavsky quotes, apparently Russians have experienced a sort of mental revolution during the last years, since the proportion of supporters of private business among them grew from 43% to 56% between 1990 and 1993. This phenomenon, however, may be linked to the fact that Russians have hardly any choice but to adapt to conditions they had not necessarily opted for, i.e., from attitudes not that different from the old days and far from indicating any deep changes. It is also unclear whether the endorsement of private initiative is not indicative of an effort to make the best of a situation in which people are forced to rely on themselves, if need be at the expense of everyone else, which does not imply any commitment to human rights that Zaslavsky sees emerging in Russia.

There is no reason to worry, however, since he also finds that the dedication of the new Russian elite to Western values and the market provides the best prospects for democracy. Zaslavsky does not care to clarify which values he has in mind, so naive readers risk to be embarrassed by a wide range of possible choices. After all, Nazism might also have had something to do with Western values, and the latter did not prevent British or French elites from being rather sparing when it came to institutionalizing them in their colonies. Market relations are far more developed in India and Peru than in Russia, where these countries and several dozen others with a comparable degree of prosperity and fairly advanced market structure are simply forgotten when people seek salvation in the marketplace. It also goes unnoticed that it is precisely the pressure of the esteemed market economy which makes child labor and even child slavery pretty widespread in what is usually taken for the "world's largest democracy"[13] where, to be sure, such practices do not prevent the holding of regular elections. When all is said and done, this is the only thing democracy boils down to for Zaslavsky, who does not see much use for its other features and sees a strong presidential regime as a solution to Russia's problems. As far back as 1990, both what were considered then the "conservative" camp and its "progressive" opponents were calling for a firm presidential rule, to which the latter attributed the virtue of being able to bring about the blessings

12. Kurganov, *op. cit.*, p. 29.
13. B. Philip, "Enfants esclaves en Inde," in *Le Monde* (August 25, 1993).

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of market economy and democracy.[14] A spokesman of the "democrats" even suggested establishing a "regime with a strong executive" for a "transitional period,"[15] apparently counting on the circumstance, very much like Zaslavsky, that his fellow countrymen had ample opportunity to get accustomed to the adversities of more than seventy years of experimenting with a "society of transition."

Zaslavsky is right to point out that most members of Russia's unceremoniously dissolved parliament had been leftovers of the Party-State, although he should also add that the situation is by no means different with the staff of the executive branch which is so valiantly fighting for democracy. Consequently, it is not necessarily their background that explains their stubborn insistence on the legislative branch being able to control the executive. Trotsky, Bukharin and their followers also did not care too much for "intra-Party democracy," as long as they were the ones to dictate the mores of the venerable organization. Today's champions of extended presidential powers suddenly may discover that legislators represent the true interests of the nation. It is interesting to compare the text they succeeded rushing through last year's Constitutional Assembly, which had no legal status at all, with the version submitted by the commission charged with drafting a new fundamental law and already committed to strong presidential authority. Beyond scrapping a multitude of more or less significant details such as legislative checks over the budget, they succeeded in eliminating all restrictions on the president's right to declare a state of emergency (the delay in which the parliament is supposed to sanction the move as well as the prohibition to use it to change the constitution and the electoral system, to abolish the powers of the parliament and the judiciary or to carry out death sentences).

Nothing characterizes better the considerations of momentary expediency guiding the by-and-large self-appointed guardians of Russia's nascent constitution than their eagerness to abolish the institution of the vice-presidency. Yeltsin's relations with his 1991 running-mate (who, after all, was no less an elected officeholder than himself) had been notoriously strained even before the dramatic events of autumn 1993. Hence the decision to do away with his office, either because it is assumed that any vice-president is only a nuisance or because no one among the architects of Russian democracy thinks the new fundamental law

14. *Izvestiia* (March 14, 1990), p. 3; (March 16, 1990), p. 6; *Pravda* (March 18, 1990), p. 3.
15. *Ogonek*, No. 50 (1990), p. 6.

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would constitute anything more than another pretext to quarrel with their political adversaries. Be that as it may, even democrats must have noticed that someone should replace the head of state if he is unable to fulfill his duties. This is why this version of the Constitutional Assembly specified that if the president is for some reason incapacitated, then his powers are assumed by someone who is not an elected official.[16] The version concocted after the defeat of the Supreme Soviet is even more explicit in spelling out the hard-won (though not necessarily lasting) advantages the victors of the October 1993 conflict succeeded in securing. By forgoing most of the legislative checks Yeltsin's followers had been unwilling to cope with in the past and by caricaturing the federal principle they achieved not only a poor imitation of the constitution of the Fifth Republic (which has been agonizing for quite a long time before its merits were discovered in Moscow), but also one fraught with far-reaching consequences the founding fathers of Russia' democracy are apparently unable to foresee. The very idea of a parliament composed of professional politicians should militate against restraining its prerogatives to the utmost. It is easier to ignore the existence of a multitude of regions and their specific interests in a document dictated by the turn of the political tide than in pedestrian realities.

The point here is not to decide which side is right: the Russian parliament or the executive. Yet it is obvious that the latter is hardly in a position to see beyond the political imperatives of the moment and does not seem particularly enthusiastic about granting more prerogatives to elected assemblies than the Central Committee — all the while trying to institute itself as the successor of the Politburo and its agencies. It is all the more difficult to see a significant difference between the projects of the quarreling camps (who have been invariably invoking lofty democratic ideals), since they barely contain even a hint of anything resembling an intention to institutionalize more or less direct participation by citizens in decision-making beyond the generously conceded right to go to the polls.

How could Zaslavsky, the perceptive critic of the Soviet system, overlook all this? How could he adopt the frame of references defined by the self-understanding of those he is observing instead of trying to develop analytical tools independently from their claims, as he used to in the past? Why is he suddenly capitulating to the logic of the given and sparing no effort — just as Russian politicians are doing — to

16. V. Lefitinskii, "Dva proekta," in *Nezavisimaia gazeta* (August 6, 1993), p. 5.

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make a virtue of necessity? Why is he discovering the heuristic merits of categories such as "Western values," "market" or "democracy" without trying to see what they denote in the context in which he uses them and without asking himself if they have a clear and unambiguous meaning at all? All indications are that he has been shopping at the supermarket of intellectual pre-fabs where he must have bought not only the trendy talk about "transition" but also the conceptual panoply of Sunday newspapers in which most of this chatter takes place and which are not supposed to carry disheartening news.

There is no question of rehabilitating the old Soviet regime. Not even Russian extremists are thinking about that, even if they are nostalgic about the lost empire. But if its successor offers little more than the prospect of continuing to sweat on household plots and to capitalize on the population's experience with survival during presumably transitional though in fact life-long periods, then, with all its promise of market, Western values, human rights and democracy, the transition Zaslavsky celebrates does not promise much more than a face-lifting of the old order.

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Elements *of the New Russian Nationalism*

Nikolai-Klaus von Kreitor

Among the nationalistic publications which have proliferated in Russia since the collapse of the Soviet Union is a journal begun in July 1992 called *Elementy: Evraziiskoe Obozrenie* (Elements: Eurasian Review), published by the "Center for Special Meta-Strategic Studies." Edited by Alexandr Dugin, it lists as a co-editor Viktor Alsknis, the controversial former member of the former Russian parliament. Indicative of the character of this journal is the latest issue (No. 3, July 1993), which begins with an unsigned editorial statement (probably written by Dugin) titled "*Auto-da-fé* of the Intellectuals . . . Clearing the Way for the Elite." Uppermost in *Elementy*'s agenda is the search for a new political orientation for Russia. Thus it is not surprising that this search has engendered an interest, albeit selective, in Carl Schmitt,[1] as well as in some other well known right-wing writers such as Julius Evola, Arthur Möller van den Bruck, and the Austrian General Heinrich Jordis von Lochhausen.

According to Dugin, who has already introduced Schmitt's work in Russia,[2] "Schmitt's writings are especially relevant for Russia because of his brilliant analysis of emergency situations and the need for a decision to preserve the Russian people's national existence. . . . People exist politically only if they constitute an independent political community and only if, as an entity, they oppose other political entities in order

1. Schmitt's *The Concept of the Political* has been translated into Russian and published in *Voprosy Sociologii*, No, 1 (Moscow 1992).

2. See Alexandr Dugin, "Carl Schmitt — piati urokoe Rossii," in *Nash Sovremmennik*, No. 8 (Moscow 1992), pp. 129, 130 and 135.

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to preserve the cultural specificity of their own community." Dugin goes on to single out Russia's enemy — the US — and expose the myth of American democracy and its pseudo-universal claims, while calling for the establishment of a *Grossraum* on the European continent, based on a coalition of Russia and European powers such as Germany and France — a kind of *pax Euroasiatica* opposed to the current *pax Americana*.

The second part of *Elementy*, headed "Geopolitical Notebooks" and devoted to translations and documents,[3] opens with an article titled "Geopolitical Problems of Neighboring Countries" identified only as "Material Provided by the Center for Special Meta-Strategic Studies" (Dugin's thinking, however, is clearly discernable). According to this analysis, the New World Order envisioned by President Bush seeks to turn the world into one gigantic *Grossraum* dominated by the US and orchestrated through the UN to subvert the residual sovereignty of all other countries. This scenario ultimately foresees the UN losing all relevance or becoming merely a legitimating façade for US geopolitical objectives. For Dugin, this emerging New World Order may lead to a further disintegration of whatever remains of national sovereignty. In this respect, the bipolar world obtaining before 1991 allowed much more freedom to countries falling within the spheres of influence of the two superpowers than is possible today within the new geopolitical framework. As Dugin sees it, the new world situation confronts all countries other than the US, especially the former members of the Warsaw Pact, with two alternatives: either become integrated into the projected "Atlantic *Grossraum*," thus forfeiting whatever remains of their national sovereignty, or join Russia in the creation of a new Eurasian *Grossraum* able to oppose the US and to safeguard national sovereignty and cultural autonomy.[4] Reformulated within Schmittian categories, this essentially amounts to a call for the restoration of the former Soviet Empire.

Much of Dugin's geopolitical analysis is focused on a Pentagon document titled Defense Planning Guidance, drafted under the supervision of Paul D. Wolfowitz, the Pentagon Under Secretary for Policy. According to Dugin, this 46 page document constitutes a blueprint for world domination, outlines strategies to subvert the UN by substituting for it

3. Among them there is Carl Schmitt, "Novyi 'Nomos' Zemli," preceded by an editorial introduction.

4. Dugin cites National Security Council Memorandum 68, which called for a roll-back strategy to hasten the decay of the old Soviet system from within through a variety of overt and covert means.

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a US-dominated NATO, and asserts the right of the US to sidestep the UN and act unilaterally.[5] From this he concludes that the former US allies may become its future enemies, i.e., that the immediate US threat to Russia may eventually become a threat to France, Germany and Japan as well.

Two consequences of the New World Order are crucial for Dugin: the new framework of international law being created thereby and its implications for Russia and Europe (as exemplified by the war in the former Yugoslavia). Any analysis of the transformation of international law must focus on the Monroe Doctrine, which has been the basis of American imperialism from its very inception. Here Dugin applies Schmitt's concept of *Grossraum* and his critique of American imperialism[6] to deduce the consequences of US policy for Russia and Europe. Thus the war in the former Yugoslavia is viewed as a re-run of the Spanish Civil War (with the US assuming the role of the former fascist powers) and as a general rehearsal for what may happen to Russia in the event the US gains a strategic nuclear superiority. In this respect, what outrages Dugin the most is the US threats of air strikes against Serbian forces.

Dugin also reintroduces Friedrich Naumann's concept of *Mitteleuropa*.

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5. Excerpts from this document have been published in *The New York Times* (March 8, 1992). The US strategy is summarized as follows: "Our first objective is to prevent the reemergence of a new rival, either on the territory of the former Soviet Union or elsewhere, that poses a threat on the order of that posed formerly by the Soviet Union. This is a dominant consideration underlying the new regional defense strategy and requires that we endeavor to prevent any hostile power from dominating a region whose resources would, under consolidated control, be sufficient to generate global power. These regions include Western Europe, East Asia, the territory of the former Soviet Union, and Southwest Asia. There are three additional aspects to this objective: first, the US must show the leadership necessary to establish and protect a new order that holds the promise of convincing potential competitors that they need not aspire to a greater role or pursue a more aggressive posture to protect their legitimate interests. Second, in the non-defensive areas, we must account sufficiently for the interests of the advanced industrial nations to discourage them from challenging our leadership or seeking to overturn the established political and economic order. Finally, we must maintain the mechanisms for deterring potential competitors from even aspiring to a larger regional or global role. . . . NATO is the primary instrument of Western defense and security, as well as the channel for US influence and participation in European security affairs. While the US supports the goal of European integration, we must seek to prevent the emergence of European only security arrangements which will undermine NATO." What Dugin does not seem to understand, however, is that Pentagon strategy is not *ipso facto* US strategy, and that the Pentagon's Under Secretary for Policy can only make policy proposals, subject to subsequent approval by the Administration.

6. See Carl Schmitt, *Völkerrechtliche Grossraumsordnung mit Interventionsverbot für raumfremde Mächte: Ein Beitrag zum Reichsbegriff im Völkerrecht*3 (1941), Second Printing (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991).

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It is under this heading that he publishes Möller van den Bruck's old analysis of "Germany Between Europe and the West" as an introduction to Lochhausen's article, "War in the Persian Gulf — War Against Europe." According to the latter, "the US has understood that in order to maintain its world-wide domination it must position itself against its enemies of tomorrow — Japan and a United Europe. The US has decided to take firm control of those oil resources on which Japan and Germany will depend in the future. . . . The war in Iraq was such a positioning and was made possible only because the Soviet Union had been eliminated as a player in the world arena. . . . One must remember that the country which controls Arab oil also controls Western Europe and Japan. . . . It is equally disturbing that the US forced Germany and Japan to finance a war which ultimately was meant to weaken and control them in the future."[7] Lochhausen also claims that the war against Iraq was planned long in advance and that its blueprint was drawn by Henry Kissinger (in 1975 in *Commentary* and later in *Harper's Magazine*) and that US participation in both WWI and WWII was largely parasitic: while the Allies made the decisive efforts, the US eventually reaped the fruits of victory. Dugin complements this analysis with his own "metaphysical geopolitics"articulated in his article on the "Metaphysics of the Continent" — the second part of an ongoing article titled "From Sacred Geography to Geopolitics." Dugin also calls for a revival of the dichotomy between European *Kultur* and Anglo-Saxon (read: American) *Zivilisation*. Reminiscent of the Rapallo Treaty, he calls for an alliance between Russia and other European countries, above all Germany and France, to develop a geopolitical strategy aimed at creating a new *Grossraum* opposed to the *pax Americana*. This *pax Euroasiatica* must have an enemy and this enemy is the American *Grossraum*. Consequently Dugin calls for what he prefigures as a *Kulturkampf* to challenge American hegemony as a threat to Europe not only as a historical formation but a cultural entity. Clearly, this search for a new political orientation is indicative of the crisis brought about by the collapse of communism — a development which has led Russian nationalists to look to the Right after the failure of the Left.

7. Here right-wing and left-wing interpretations of the Gulf War coincide in their anti-Americanism. For Left analyses parallel to Lochhousen, see Dario Da Re, Rossana Mungiello and Dario Padovan, "Intellettuali, Sinistra e Conflitto del Golfo: una Interpretazione Retrospettiva del Dibattito," in *Altreragioni*, No. 2 (1993), pp. 151-174, and Noam Chomsky's recent work on the subject, such as his *The New World Order* (New Jersey: Open Magazine, 1991) and *Terrorizing the Neighborhood. American Foreign Policy in the Post-Cold War Era* (Stirling and San Francisco: AK Press, 1991).

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*Roosevelt's European Policy and the Origins of the Cold War: A Reevaluation**

Elena Aga-Rossi

Current interpretations of Roosevelt's WWII diplomacy and of the beginning of the Cold War have focused almost exclusively on US-USSR relations as the key to the postwar division of Europe.[1] Little attention has been paid to Roosevelt's policy towards Europe or, more importantly, US plans for postwar Europe. Although, following the recent opening of previously inaccessible archives, there have been several new studies on wartime bilateral relations between the US and various European countries, Roosevelt's European policy has yet to be assessed.

Despite the vast literature on the subject, historians have generally ignored Roosevelt's objectives regarding Europe, or have come to the conclusion that it is possible to speak of a US "non-policy," at least towards Eastern Europe.[2] In fact, Roosevelt did have a consistent policy towards Europe, which contributed significantly to the postwar division of

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* An earlier version of this essay was published as "Origins of the Bipolar World. Roosevelt's Policy Towards Europe and the Soviet Union: A Reevaluation," in *Working Papers. International and Area Studies* (Berkeley: Center for German and European Studies, University of California, 1993).

1. Recent books on Roosevelt's diplomacy are: Warren Kimball, *The Juggler. F. D. Roosevelt as a Wartime Statesman* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991); Frederick W. Marks, *Wind over Sana* (Athens, GA: Georgia University Press, 1988); Robert Dallek, *F. D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979); Frank Burt Freidel, *Franklin Delano Roosevelt. A Rendezvous with Destiny* (Boston: Little Brown, 1990).

2. See Geir Lundestad, *The American Non-policy Towards Eastern Europe* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1978).

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Europe. It is well-known that he himself made major foreign policy decisions, often in the utmost secrecy, either alone or in consultation with a few like-minded advisors. Roosevelt's secretive practices in foreign policy, his disguising of his true intentions, the lack of records concerning important meetings and the exclusion of the State Department from major decisions have given rise to conflicting interpretations of his diplomacy. Although Roosevelt is usually portrayed as indecisive and vacillating between different policy options, there is ample documentation to show that from the outset he had a clear vision of his objective — a postwar order based on US hegemony, following two parallel but interrelated courses: 1) the reduction of Europe's international role and its marginalization as the safest means to prevent major conflicts in the future; 2) the creation of a permanent superpower alliance with the USSR to ensure world stability.

The Marginalization of Europe

Roosevelt's European policy can be traced to the tradition of American isolationism. His attitude toward Europe was shaped by distrust of European politics and British "imperialism." The perception of Europe as the major source of instability that had led to two world wars was generally shared by the US political elite and the population at large. Roosevelt's refusal to become embroiled in European territorial disputes and his distrust of European power politics reflected a permanent feature of US foreign policy. Accordingly, his war aims were not limited to the destruction of German and Italian military power, to the creation of an international organization to prevent future wars and to the establishment of a broad system of free trade. He also sought to reduce Europe's geopolitical role by fragmenting the continent into small, relatively powerless and (wherever possible) ethnically homogeneous states. This position was outlined in a July 14, 1941 letter to Churchill, in which Roosevelt stated his intention to secure peace in Europe "by disarming all trouble-makers and, secondly, by considering the possibility of reviving small states in the interest of harmony even if this has to be accomplished through plebiscite methods."[3] Here his position was similar to Stalin's who, in Churchill's words, desired a Europe "composed of little states, disjointed, separated and weak."[4] Roosevelt

3. Warren P. Kimball, ed., *Churchill and Roosevelt. The Complete Correspondance*, Vol. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press), p. 221.

4. U.S. Department of State, *Foreign Relations of the United States* (cited hereafter as *FRUS*), *The Conferences at Cairo and Tehran. 1943* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 881.

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was certain that WWII would destroy continental Europe militarily and economically, removing France and Germany from the ranks of world powers.

From the outset, Roosevelt's policy was torn between interventionism and isolationism. To prevent Europe from becoming a potential source of a new global conflagration, it had to be restructured, neutralized and marginalized into a continent composed of small and largely disarmed countries balancing each other. International trusteeships would gradually replace European colonial empires, and the British system of imperial preferences would be eliminated.[5] Yet Roosevelt did not mean to take responsibility for what would happen in Europe after the war. He was convinced that there would be "civil wars in many parts of Europe when the Germans let go," and sought to keep the US out of these expected troublespots.[6] After all, he had to take into account the persistence of strong isolationist sentiments among wide segments of the American population. Early in the war this internal "peace bloc," hostile to any involvement in European affairs and ready to compromise with Hitler's Germany, had made itself felt,[7] as had the fear that the US would inadvertendy help the British government pursue imperialistic goals. Roosevelt sought to reconcile interventionism and isolationism by delegating control over Europe to Great Britain and the USSR as European superpowers. His vision of a postwar order was based on the assumption that the future world would inevitably be organized around an open market and free enterprise. In this hierarchically structured world, local superpowers would maintain law and order within their respective spheres of influence, while American economic supremacy would guarantee the US both a preeminent political position and the prevalence of American interests.[8] Things such as Roosevelt's tendency

5. On American anti-colonialism during the war years, see David Cameron Watt, *Succeeding John Bull, America in Britain's Place 1900-1975* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 220-252; William Roger Louis, *Imiperialism at Bay, the United States and the Decolonization of the British Empire, 1941-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978); William Roger Louis and H. D. Bull, eds., *The "Special Relationship." Anglo-American Relations Since 1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986).

6. *FRUS*, *op. cit.*, p. 259.

7. Richard W. Steele, "American Popular Opinion and the War Against Germany: The Issue of Negotiated Peace, 1942," *Journal of American History* (December 1978), pp. 704-725.

8. According to Schlesinger, Roosevelt believed that after the war "America would be the most powerful country on the planet. He expected to use that power to promote a New Deal for the world — democratic societies based on human rights, economic growth, social reform, the development of natural resources and a freely trading international economy; a trading system that would, incidentally, assure markets and raw

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to postpone official territorial agreements, his tactic of "non-commitment," his refusal to make irreversible political choices, his disregard for the rights of small countries, i.e., what at first glance seem inconsistent, contradictory or simply counterproductive to US interests, can be understood only by taking into account Roosevelt's vision of a desirable postwar order and of Europe's role in it.

In 1941 Roosevelt persuaded a reluctant British government to postpone official political and territorial agreements until after the war. He and his advisors feared that, as in WWI, Great Britain would make secret postwar committments. When such a case came to light — the British promise to cede the Italian port of Trieste to a reconstituted Yugoslavia — Roosevelt chastised the British government and had it agree to a policy of "no post-war peace commitments as to territories, populations or economics."[9] This principle was then written in the Atlantic Charter. Roosevelt often relied on short-term planning as the best way to avoid making binding decisions. He preferred to concentrate on immediate military objectives and postpone political decisions. He would watch events from the sidelines without committing his administration to a potentially wrong course, thus turning procrastination into a positive policy. he was convinced of the need for a period "of trial and error"[10] before a definitive settlement could be reached. He did not want to end up like Wilson at Versailles, bound by previous commitments. Moreover, he did not want to antagonize ethnic sectors in his constituency by outlining territorial solutions or making plans for political arrangements in postwar Europe. Finally, he was convinced that after the war the US would be in a much better position *vis- à- vis* its allies, especially the USSR, to define a desirable world order.

This approach had obvious shortcomings. It often left lower echelons of the administration stranded not only concerning postwar planning but also day-to-day policy — a predicament which had "very definite

materials for the United States." See Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., "Franklin D. Roosevelt's Internationalism," in Cornelis A. van Minnen and John F. Stars. eds., *FDR and His Contemporaries. Foreign Perceptions of an American President* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992). p. 14.

9. Roosevelt to Churchill, July 14. 1941, in *Churchill and Roosevelt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 221. Roosevelt's initiative originated in a memorandum written a few days before by the Assistant Secretary of State, Adolf A. Berle, who had warned the president that various preliminary commitments were being made by the British government and the Soviet Union. See "Memorandum to the President," July 8, 1941, in *Diary, July-September 1941* (Hyde Park, NY: Berle Papers, F.D Roosevelt Library).

10. "Memorandum of Conversation with President Roosevelt," October 5, 1943, *FRUS*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, 1963, p. 542.

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and in some cases lasting effects in the political field."[11] Thus US representatives never knew what position to take in inter-Allied organizations such as the Advisory Council and the Allied Control Commission for Italy or the European Advisory Commission (the tripartite body entrusted with drafting the terms of surrender for the Axis satellites). As a result, these negotiations would be stalled for months for lack of instructions from Washington. It is not surprising that in the end the European Advisory Commission could not come up with a coherent policy and proposed nearly identical surrender terms for Germany and satellite countries such as Romania, Bulgaria and Hungary, notwithstanding the different relations these countries had with Germany and with the Allied powers, the different circumstances in which they joined the conflict and the possibility that by the end of the war their pro-German governments might have been replaced.

Another consequence was that the US government would delay as long as possible recognition of central authority in liberated countries and deal only with local authorities. This was officially justified by the policy of not interfering in local affairs, while in reality it was meant to maintain local control. The most obvious example was Roosevelt's refusal to recognize De Gaulle's authority, not only in North Africa, where it made some sense, but also in France. In his meeting with De Gaulle at the January 1943 Casablanca conference Roosevelt defended the Allies' right to "hold the political situation in trust for the French people."[12] In fact, as Eden put it: " . . . Roosevelt wanted to hold the strings of France's future in his own hands, so that he could decide that country's fate."[13] After all, Roosevelt was not at all interested in the reemergence of France as a world power. (On the contrary, he believed that "a power vacuum in the heart of Europe — in place of Germany — was desirable.[14]

Roosevelt had no sympathy for smaller European countries such as Finland or even Poland. He did not believe that democratic institutions could be established in Eastern Europe. In Roosevelt's view, the position of Eastern Europe *vis-à-vis* the Soviet Union as the regional great power

11. George Kennan's Memorandum of March 9, 1944, in Records of Philip Mosely, 1943-45. European Advisory Commission, RG 43, National Archives, Washington.

12. Note by Lt. Commander McCrea, January 22, 1945, *FRUS, The Conferences at Washington 1941-1942 and Casablanca, 1943* (Washington, D.C, 1968), pp. 694-696.

13. Earl of Avon (Anthony Eden), *The Reckoning. The Memoirs of Anthony Eden* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1965). p. 431.

14. Cited in Gaddis Smith, *American Diplomacy during the Second World War 1941-1945*, 2nd ed. (New York: Wiley, 1985), p. 62.

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was analogous to that of Latin America *vis-à-vis* the US.[15] He was *always* convinced that many decisions reached after WWI could be overturned, and that Germany had to be partitioned and deprived of part of its territory. He also envisioned splitting up multiethnic countries such as Belgium, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Finally, he wondered whether it would be advisable "in the interests of quiet conditions, to keep the Croats from the throats of the Serbs and vice versa."[16] He wanted to deploy a system of international trusteeship not only for the colonies but also for Europe, and not merely as punishment for the Axis countries but for neutral and allied countries as well. Thus he mentioned the possibility of placing under international trusteeship the Kiel canal, the Ruhr, Hamburg in Germany and Trieste in Italy, along with some Norwegian ports, in order to provide Russia with access to warm water ports, and to create bases in Belgium and in France with little thought to questions of sovereignty.[17]

The US did not back such emergent anti-fascist forces as the resistance movements and the Liberation Committees in France and Italy. Instead, it supported forces committed to maintaining the *status quo*, such as the Vatican (whose importance Roosevelt greatly exaggerated) and conservative groups. American support of Petain or Darlan and the recognition of the Badoglio government after the demise of Mussolini in the summer of 1943, were all justified by "military expediency." After backing the more malleable Giraud against De Gaulle, Roosevelt even wanted the Allies to break with the "unreliable, uncooperative, and disloyal" De Gaulle and with his French Committee of National Liberation, and "go ahead and encourage the creation of another organism of Frenchmen."[18] The French Committee was recognized only after

15. Having expressed at Teheran his general disinterest in Polish internal affairs and having accepted Stalin's definition of future Polish boundaries, Roosevelt later justified his abandonment of the Polish cause with the assertion that "no government in Latin America has a parliamentary form of government" (Conversation between Stettinius and Roosevelt, 17 March 1944, in "Calendar Notes," box 741, Stettinius Papers, Charlotteville, Virginia). Roosevelt's attitude was shared, or inspired, by A. Berle, as we will see later. See also Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1950), p. 178.

16. Churchill to Roosevelt, July 14, 1941, in *Churchill and Roosevelt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 1, p. 221.

17. See the preliminary discussions for the Moscow conference, *FRUS*, 1943, Vol. 1, p. 543; *FRUS, The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, *op. cit.*, pp. 566-567; memorandom of conversation with President Roosevelt, by R. D. Murphy, September 9, 1944, Murphy Papers, Hoover Institution; for Trieste, see Roberto Giorgio Rabel, *Between East and West, Trieste, the United States and the Cold War, 1941-1954* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1988), p. 24.

18. Roosevelt to Churchill, June 17, 1945, in *Churchill and Roosevelt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 255.

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the Normandy landing, when it became obvious that it controlled the active partisan movement. Roosevelt dealt with both France and Italy in the same way with regard to administration. While it was obvious that Italy, a defeated country, should initially be administered by the Allied armies, it was less obvious for France. Yet Roosevelt's initial plan stipulated analogous Allied military administrations — France too had to be run by the British or American Commander-in-Chief "for six months or even a year."[19] This scheme was later perfected to empower Eisenhower, the Commander-in-Chief of the Normandy operation, to decide where, why and how the administration of France was to be carried out by French citizens, on the assumption that "the military situation must govern."[20] It was all consistent with Roosevelt's vision of a postwar Europe not so much as a region of autonomous sovereign states but as a collection of weak and dependent countries with greatly reduced international roles.

The marginalization of Europe was reinforced by a shift in US foreign policy during WWII. If before the war the USSR, a peripheral power, did not play a significant role in Roosevelt's thinking about the future of Europe, during the war it became crucial. Correspondingly, this shift began influencing Roosevelt's policy towards Europe. After the USSR joined the Allies in their struggle against Nazism, the assumption that "Great Britain shall have the primary position in the political and economic reorganization of West Europe"[21] was complemented with one whereby the USSR would take similar responsibilities with regard to Eastern Europe. Already in February 1942 the Assistant Secretary of State Adolph Berle (a close advisor to Roosevelt) wrote in his diary: "As I see it . . . the smaller countries in Eastern Europe cannot exist as isolated units. They will be dominated by someone — either Russia or Germany. . . . I see no reason why we should object to their being within the orbit of Russia, provided we were assured that the USSR would not use this power to subvert the governments . . . ."[22]

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19. Roosevelt to Churchill, May 8, 1943, in *Churchill and Roosevelt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 3, p. 210.

20. Draft of instructions for Eisenhower on civil administration in France, prepared by the State Department with Roosevelt's approval, March 15, 1944, Murphy Papers, Box 47, Hoover Archives.

21. *Proposed Directive: the President to the Secretary of State and Other Interested Agencies*, November 1942, Berle Papers, Post-War Plans, Box 65, F. D. Roosevelt Archives, Hyde Park, N.Y.

22. See the diary of the Assistant Secretary of State, Adolph Berle, February 5, 1942, in Beatrice Bishop Berle and Travis Beal Jacobs, eds., *Navigating the Rapids, 1918-1971: From the Papers of Adolph Berle* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1973), p. 401.

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After the Soviet army had demonstrated its ability to resist the German army and it had become clear that the USSR would play a dominant role in the defeat of the Axis, a postwar superpower status for the USSR became inevitable. Accordingly, Roosevelt enlarged the concept of an Anglo-US world police force, elaborated at the August 1941 Arcadia Conference with Churchill, into his well-known "four policemen" theory.[23] As he told the British Foreign Minister in March 1943, "armaments after the war in Europe should be concentrated in the hands of policing powers — Britain, the United States and Russia. The smaller powers might have rifles but nothing more dangerous than this."[24] Europe was to be divided into two spheres of influence, between Britain and the USSR. These two great powers had to maintain order over other disarmed European countries, if necessary by force.[25] At least initially, Roosevelt perceived the postwar European situation as "fundamentally an Anglo-Russian dispute": the US would keep a balance between the two countries, acting as a mediator or, in Lippmann's words, "a unifying power,"[26] although at crucial junctures Roosevelt demanded to participate in every important decision regarding Europe.[27] Hence, who would eventually rule this or that European country was secondary, as were territorial disputes among Europeans.[28]

Roosevelt delegated to Great Britain the management of political relations with West European countries such as Italy or France. As he wrote to Churchill: "Please do not ask me to keep any American forces in

23. For the best analysis of the "four policemen" theory see Robert A. Divine, *Roosevelt and World War II* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1969), pp 59ff.

24. Telegram from Washington to Foreign Office, Eden to Churchill, March 16, 1943, FO 371/36991, PRO, London.

25. At Teheran Roosevelt declared that the United States could, if necessary, intervene only with the navy and air forces. *FRUS, The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943* (Washington, DC: Washington Government Printing Office, 1961), p. 530.

26. Quoted in Herbert George Nicholas, ed., *Washington Dispatches, 1941-1945. Weekly Political Reports from the British Embassy*, (London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, 1981), pp. 562-563. See also Eleanor Roosevelt, *As He Saw It* (New York: Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1946), pp.129-130 and 176-177.

27. When Churchill was to meet Stalin in Moscow in October 1944, Roosevelt made clear in a message to Stalin through the US Ambassador to the USSR, Averell Harriman, that the Prime Minister was not authorized to speak for the US, stating that "in this global war there is literally no question, military or political, in which the United States is not interested." See the text of the message in William Averell Harriman and Elie Abel, *Special Envoy to Churchill and Stalin, 1941-1946* (New York: Random House, 1975), p. 354.

28. Roosevelt expressed annoyance when asked "what are you going to do about such and such five-square kilometer area in the world?" ee Samuel J. Rosenman, *The Public Papers and Addresses of Franklin D. Roosevelt* (New York: Random House, 1938-1950), Vol. 12, p. 459.

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France. I just cannot do it! I would have to bring them all back home. As I suggested before, I denounce and protest the paternity of Belgium, France and Italy. You really ought to bring up and discipline your own children. In view of the fact that they may be your bulwark in future days, you should at least pay for their schooling now!"[29]

Roosevelt sought to gain Stalin's trust and avoid serious disagreements throughout the war by accepting the Soviet request for a *cordon sanitaire* of friendly regimes as justified by security needs. In return, Roosevelt expected Stalin's cooperation for the postwar European order. The viability of this arrangement rested on the belief, shared by US and British administrations, that the USSR would abandon Marxism-Leninism and expansionism in favor of collaboration and European stability.[30] Roosevelt always had tended to underestimate Soviet ideology, dismissing it as something of the past, thereby accepting ex-ambassador Joseph Davies' positive evaluation of the Soviet regime over William Bullitt's more alarming views.

Thus both the "orthodox" interpretation ("Roosevelt lost Europe at Yalta because of his naiveté about Stalin's intentions") and the "revisionist" thesis ("the division of Europe was inevitable after the Yalta conference since Soviet troops had already occupied the disputed territories and the USSR had contributed an incomparably greater military effort to the victory over the Axis than Great Britain and the US") are wrong. Both interpretations overemphasize US-USSR relations, ignore the US general position towards Europe and focus only on the last months of the war. But as early as 1942 Roosevelt held the following position: 1) collaboration with the USSR was the most important American objective for

29. Roosevelt to Churchill, February 29, 1944, in *Churchill and Roosevelt*, *op. cit.*, Vol. 2, p. 767.

30. On the British position, see the memorandum, "Soviet Policy in Europe," by the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, dated August 9, 1944, FO 371/43336, PRO; *The Foreign Office and the Kremlin*, British documents on Anglo-Soviet Relations, ed. by George Ross (London/New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984). For the American position see "War and Peace Aims of the Soviet Union," March 29, 1944, Policy Committee, Box 138, Records of H. Notter, RG 59, NA. See also Elena Aga-Rossi, *Gli Stati Uniti e le Origin della Guerra Fredda* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1984), pp. 34-39; E. Mark, "American Policy Towards Eastern Europe and the Origins of the Cold War, 1941-1946: An Alternative Interpretation," in *Journal of American History*, Vol. 68 (1981), No. 2, pp. 313-336, who quotes a 1940 memorandum by Charles Bohlen. The same attitude was expressed by Lippmann in his 1943 book, in which he stated that "the story of Russian-American relations is an impressive demonstration of how unimportant in the determination of policy is ideology, how compelling is national interest." See Walter W. Lippmann, *U.S. Foreign Policy: Shield of the Republic* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1943), pp. 138-139.

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maintaining the postwar peace and promoting US interests; 2) collaboration with the USSR was possible as long as Soviet requests and "legitimate interests" in Europe and in Asia were satisfied; 3) the division of Europe into spheres of influence between Britain and the Soviet Union was not only inevitable, but desirable.

These basic principles — including the division of Europe into spheres of influence — had already been accepted by Spring 1943. The first discussion of Soviet postwar aims took place during Eden's visit to Washington in March of that year. This was one of the few occasions that produced a documentary record of Roosevelt's views on many postwar problems, from the disarming of small nations and the division of Germany to Soviet territorial requests — views which remained essentially unchanged throughout the war.[31] Even at this early date both English and American leaders accepted that the USSR would "lop off . . . certain territory along the boundaries of Europe."[32] There was never any question of preventing this. Rather, the problem was whether the USSR might then retire in "isolation" and "not decide to be a part of the world."[33]

The US position was clearly reiterated in a "very high-level US military strategic estimate" of the Soviet position that Harry Hopkins brought to the August-September 1943 Quebec conference.[34] It was confirmed by a September 18, 1943 Joint Chiefs of Staff paper, which predicted that

31. On the crucial problem of Soviet territorial claims, Eden's report to Churchill of a private conversation with Roosevelt vividly summarizes the President's view: "The President, somewhat to my surprise, did not seem to find any great difficulty in the Polish question. He thought that if Poland had East Prussia and perhaps some concessions in Silesia, she would gain rather than lose by agreeing to the Curzon line. In any event we, the United States, and Russia should decide at the appropriate time what was a just and reasonable solution, and if we were agreed, Poland would have to accept. . . . Nor did he take exception to the Russian claim to the Baltic states. I think that his view of this is that if Russia takes these states nobody is going to be able to to turn her out, though he did mention that he hoped that some arrangements for a plebiscite, a method of resolving difficulties to which he seems over-optimistically attached, would be possible. . . . The President added that he did not feel any difficulty now in agreeing to Russian demands about Finland." See Telegram Eden to Churchill, 16 March 1943, *op. cit.*

32. US Department of State, *The British Commonwealth, Eastern Europe, The Far East. 1943*, Vol. 3, 1963, p. 13. This volume contains Eden's official conversations in Washington, but more information on the private talks is in the PRO.

33. *Ibid.*, p. 13.

34. The major conclusion of the document is that: "Russia's post-war position in Europe will be a dominant one. With Germany crushed, there is no power in Europe to oppose her tremendous military forces . . . since without question she [Russia] will dominate Europe on the defeat of the Axis, it is even more essential to develop and maintain the most friendly relations with Russia." See *FRUS, The Conferences at Washington and Quebec* (Washington: Washington Government Printing Office, 1970), pp. 624-625.

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alter the German defeat the USSR would be able "to impose whatever territorial settlement it desired in Central Europe and the Balkans."[35] As to the consequences of a Soviet domination of Eastern Europe, Roosevelt's September 1943 conversation with Cardinal Spellman is most revealing. Anticipating the division of the postwar world into spheres of influence, Roosevelt remarked that while Britain had "predominantly colonial interests, it might be assumed that Russia will predominate in Europe." According to Roosevelt, it would be ten or twenty years before "European influence would bring the Russians to become less barbarian."[36] Finally, at the Teheran conference, Roosevelt openly accepted Stalin's demand for Poland's new borders.[37] As Kennan notes, "Roosevelt did not have any substantive objections — any real political objections — to seeing these areas go to Russia. . . . It seemed to him of little importance whether these areas were Polish or Russian."[38] Roosevelt did not hide his annoyance with Polish demands and even proclaimed to an English visitor that a plebiscite would show that the eastern provinces might prefer to go back to Russia, concluding "yes, I really think those 1941 frontiers are as just as any."[39]

From early 1943 the US government anticipated Soviet control over an even larger part of Europe than turned out to be the case. The growing might of the Soviet army contributed significantly to the crystallization of this position. Roosevelt's acceptance of Soviet control over parts of the European continent, however, must be traced to his European policy. The vision of a Europe divided into zones of influence, the failure

35. Maurice Matloff, *Strategic Planning for Coalition Warfare, 1943-1944* (Washington D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, US Government Printing Office, 1959), p. 292.

36. Robert I. Gannon, *The Cardinal Spellman Story* (Garden City, NJ: Doubleday, 1962), pp.222-223. In this authorized biography Gannon provides a long excerpt of the Roosevelt-Spellman conversation. The Spellman papers are in the Archdiocese of New York, but are inaccessible.

37. *The Conferences at Cairo and Teheran, 1943*, *op. cit.*, pp. 594-595.

38. George Kennan, *Russia and the West Under Lenin and Stalin* (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1960), p. 357.

39. Robert Dallek, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and American Foreign Policy, 1932-1945* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 436-37. This attitude did not differ very much from the one expressed in a paper written within the Foreign Office on the "USSR and the Principles of the Atlantic Charter and of the Four Freedoms" in which there was an effort to reconcile Soviet statements with the articles of the Atlantic Charter. While the author admits that the way in which the Baltic States, the Finnish Carelia and the other regions were incorporated by the USSR did not correspond to the principles of self-determination, he also adds that "it may be pointed out that their incorporation in the USSR was due to the urgent needs of self-defence against Germany and it is arguable that in the long run the bulk of the inhabitants of the Baltic states will gain more from incorporation in the USSR than from precarious and largely fictitious independence," FO 371/43332, PRO.

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to grasp the expansionist character of the Stalinist regime and especially the inability to foresee the nature of Stalin's subsequent control over newly acquired territories, played an equally important role in shaping Roosevelt's plans for a postwar Europe. Restoring democracy in European countries, guaranteeing the right to self-determination and fair territorial settlements, securing free elections in the liberated countries, and all other political matters were considered secondary and could be postponed to the end of the war. Roosevelt was convinced that it was possible to distinguish between a military phase during the war and a political phase afterwards. Until then he wanted to "freeze" the evolution of internal politics in European countries, where all political groups from the Right to the communist Left were supposed to work towards Germany's defeat. This view was clearly reflected in Roosevelt's repeated attempts to forge alliances between Giraud and De Gaulle, Tito and Mihailovic, Badoglio and the Italian antifascist opposition.

Roosevelt and the Soviet Union

A revision of the history of US-USSR relations during WWII is long overdue since most historians continue to explain Stalin's war policy as largely defensive, or fault US policy as uncooperative.[40] What is striking in the plans for a postwar international order worked out by Soviet and Western governments is the enormous differences not only in their visions and goals but also in their approaches to the very process of planning. As Churchill noted self-critically, "intent on victory over the Axis, Britain and America had laid no sufficient plans for the fate and future of occupied Europe."[41] Actually, from the very beginning of the war both governments devoted considerable attention to the postwar

40. This is how Edward M. Bennett concludes his book, *Franklin D. Roosevelt and the Search for Victory. American-Soviet Relations, 1939-1945* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1990), p. 184: "It is easy to simply charge that Stalin planned for world domination beginning with Eastern Europe and the Balkans and possibly extending into the Far East, but this is not the likely scenario." Kimball, endorsing Martin Sherwin's thesis put forth in his *A World Destroyed. The Atomic Bomb and the Grand Alliance* (New York: Knopf, 1975), condemns Roosevelt's reluctance to share atomic secrets as "a cooperative opportunity lost that may have sabotaged the entire effort." See Kimball, *The Juggler*, *op. cit.* p. 195. Finally, Hawthorn also claims that "it is now all but certain that under Stalin, the Soviet Union was defensive, and concerned only with securing its frontiers. . . . It was only after his death that Moscow renewed its support for liberation movements among what Lenin had called 'the peoples of the east'." See Geoffrey Hawthorn, *Plausible Worlds. Plausibility and Understanding in History and the Social Sciences* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 118.

41. Winston Churchill, *Memoirs of the Second World War* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1959), p. 1000.

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settlement but, as already indicated, during the war Roosevelt preferred to concentrate on immediate military objectives and refused, even when pressed by the British or by his own staff, to commit the US to any sort of postwar arrangements. Unlike the latter, who regarded long-term plans as "prophecies by prophets who cannot be infallible,"[42] Stalin was practically obsessed with postwar arrangements.[43] From the very beginning of the Soviet-Western alliance Stalin insisted on Western recognition of Soviet territorial acquisitions resulting from the Soviet-Nazi pact and an expanded sphere of influence. Important decisions such as to embark on a nuclear project were made by Stalin while the battle for Stalingrad was underway and there were no guarantees that the Red Army would win.

These differences in attitudes concerning the postwar order cannot be explained simply by Roosevelt's and Stalin's psychological make-up but must be traced to their respective political regimes and socioeconomic systems. Stalin's obsession with long-term planning was conditioned by the nature of a planned society. In a system in which command rather than contract or custom constitute the main mode of social organization, long-term planning had always been required.[44] Roosevelt's choice not to plan a postwar Europe openly undoubtedly influenced the shape and size of the Soviet sphere of influence. But it was Roosevelt's basic misconception of the Stalinist system which played a crucial role in the postwar division of Europe and in the ensuing Sovietization of the USSR's sphere of influence. Roosevelt saw Stalin's USSR as a country like any other, the only difference being Soviet excessive preoccupation with security which, in Roosevelt's opinion, could be explained historically and culturally. If the USSR were granted its own

42. Roosevelt to Churchill, February 29, 1944, *Churchill and Roosevelt*, Vol 3, p. 766. According to Sumner Welles, the decision to postpone political and territorial decisions until after the war prevented an agreement with Stalin during the war, when the US influence was at its peak, and "was largely responsible for the division of the world . . . into two increasingly warring camps." See Sumner Welles, *Seven Decisions That Shaped History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p.145.

43. A typical example is Stalin's letter to Churchill in which he explained the lack of clarity in relations between the USSR and Great Britain by the fact that there was "no definite understanding between our two countries on war aims and on plans for the postwar organization of peace." See Winston Churchill, *The Grand Alliance. The Second World War*, Vol. 3 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1950), p. 529. What is interesting here is the date of this letter: November 8, 1941, when German troops were only a few miles away from the Red Square.

44. Thomas H. Rigby, *The Changing Soviet System. Mono-organizational Socialism from its Origins to Gorbachev's Restructuring* (Aldershot: Edward Elgar, 1990).

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sphere of influence and its immediate security concerns were satisfied, the Stalinist state would become a normal state committed to international peace, European stability and Soviet-American collaboration. As Roosevelt told his physician on the way to the Teheran conference: "[Stalin] must be tired of sitting on bayonets, just as he must realize that the war is bound to break down his iron curtain, letting his millions see the higher living standards of other peoples. If I can convince him that our offers of cooperation are on the square, and that we want to be comrades, rather than enemies, I'm betting that he'll come in."[45]

The idea that Soviet security required a buffer zone of states whose foreign policy would be controlled by the USSR was widely accepted by Western politicians. It was based on the assumption that the Soviet state's legitimate interests could be satisfied politically once and for all. It required the actual experience of Stalin's postwar foreign policy and Litvinov's revelations to understand that Stalin's territorial interests were in principle unsatisfiable.[46] Moreover, there was a general belief that the extreme weakness of the war-devasted Soviet economy would compel Stalin to turn to Western assistance for recovery and thus open the USSR to Western influences. The Soviet leadership recognized this assumption and resented it as a form of blackmail.[47] The very concept of "control" was interpreted by Soviet and American leaders in a radically different way. Roosevelt and his advisors believed that the US open-door economic policies could be reconciled with Soviet control of Eastern Europe. Even a sophisticated thinker such as Berle compared the Soviet sphere of influence in Eastern Europe with the US "special position" in Latin America and found "the ruthlessness of British commercialism and the ruthlessness of Soviet nationalism" comparable.[48]

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45. See Ross McIntire, *White House Physician* (New York: Putnam, 1946), pp. 170-171.

46. Vojtech Mastny, "The Cassandra in the Foreign Commissariat: Maxim Litvinov and the Cold War," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 54 (January 1976); Hugh Phillips, *Between the Revolution and the West. A Political Biography of Maxim M. Litvinov* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1992), pp. 172-174.

47. See "The Novikov Telegram, Washington, September 27, 1946" in Kenneth M. Jensen, ed., *Origins of the Cold War, The Novikov, Kennan, and Roberts 'Long Telegrams' of 1946* (Washingon D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1991), p. 4. Molotov ridiculed it, describing how Roosevelt relied on American economic superiority and believed that the Soviets "would come with a stretched hand. A poor country, no industry, no bread — they will come to us and beg." See Felix Chuev, *Sto sorok besed s Molotovym* [*One hundred forty Conversations with Molotov*] (Moscow: Terra, 1991), p. 67.

48. In the memorandum, "Principal Problems in Europe," dated September 26, 1944, Berle wrote: "A Soviet sphere of influence in these areas operated in somewhat the same fashion as we have operated the good neighbor policy in Mexico and in the Caribbean area would be no threat to anyone and would raise no essential conflicts,

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Berle's analogy was clearly faulty. The idea that the USSR could limit itself to controlling only the foreign policy of the countries included in the Soviet sphere of influence, while leaving them free to decide their domestic economic structure and permitting their participation in the global market, was alien to Soviet leaders. Stalin clearly assumed that any firm control over the newly acquired territories necessitated a fundamental Sovietization of their economic and political systems. Consequently, such a process in Eastern Europe was set in motion not by external forces or Western policies but by the inner logic of the Stalinist state. In this respect Molotov's definition of the "Cold War" is revealing: "What is meant by the 'Cold War'? . . . We had to consolidate what had been conquered. We had to turn a part of Germany into our, socialist Germany: as to Czechoslovakia, Poland, Hungary, Yugoslavia — they all were in a liquid state. Everything had to be straightened out, the capitalist order had to be suppressed. This is the 'Cold War'."[49]

At any rate, the inner logic of the Soviet regime and the Stalinist philosophy of history were virtually ignored by the Americans and major developments in the Communist world, such as Stalin's defeat of Trotsky or the 1943 "dissolution" of the Comintern, were largely misinterpreted. Western leaders were convinced that Stalin wanted to abandon Marxism-Leninism and to have the Communist party cooperate with his wartime allies.[50]

In reality, like Lenin and Trotsky, Stalin always believed in the coming worldwide victory of socialism and, in Tucker's words, worked toward an international Communist revolution as "a paramount, if deferred, policy goal."[51] Stalin's view of world revolution differed in one

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since it would not conflict with the basic interests of the people of these countries, nor with the operation of the British life line and the only casualty would be the attempt at economic exclusiveness sought by certain elements in the British government . . . the basic concept behind such a policy is first the elimination of these countries as center of power politics . . . " See Policy Committee Documents, Notter Files, 59, National Archives. Also published in Berle and Jacobs, *op. cit.*, pp. 460-468.

49. Chuev, *op. cit.*, p. 86.

50. This position was epitomized by Harry Hopkins who told to his biographer: "The Russians had proved that they could be reasonable and farseeing and there wasn't any doubt in the minds of the President or any of us that we could live with them and get along with them peacefully for as far into the future as any of us could imagine. But I have to make one amendment to that — I think we all had in our minds the reservation that we could not foretell what the results would be if anything should happen to Stalin." See Robert Sherwood, *Roosevelt and Hopkins. An Intimate History* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1948), p. 870.

51. Robert C. Tucker, *Political Culture and Leadership in Soviet Russia: From Lenin to Gorbachev* (New York: Norton, 1987), p. 67.

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crucial respect from classical Marxism: he envisaged future revolutions not in advanced capitalist countries but in those bordering the USSR. By the mid-1920's Stalin had become convinced that Soviet security and the eventual triumph of world socialism depended on the replacement of capitalist encirclement by a friendly "socialist encirclement." The Russian revolution had split the world into two hostile "camps": "Anglo-America" and "Soviet Russia." The first would attract countries gravitating toward capitalism; the second, countries gravitating toward socialism.[52] At the same time, he implicitly equated further progress of the international Communist revolution with the USSR's annexation of bordering lands, as occurred during Stalin's pact with Hitler in 1939-1941 and after WWII. As Molotov put it: "As the Minister of Foreign Affairs I saw my task in expanding as far as possible the boundaries of my motherland. It seems that Stalin and I have done a rather good job in this regard."[53] According to Soviet leaders, the elimination of the capitalist system in all likelihood would have occurred as a result of a third world war. Molotov reports Stalin thinking that "WWI has moved one country away from capitalist slavery. WWII has created the socialist [world] system, the third one will finish off imperialism."[54]

To the very end, Molotov accepted the very core of Stalinism. Soviet veteran diplomat Vladimir Erofeev, who for many years worked in Molotov's personal Chancellery, writes about the prevailing attitude which made Molotov "suspicious and a priori diffident toward whatever might come from the US, Britain and other imperialists. . . . Essentially that kind of reaction was due to a class-governed approach and ideological considerations which often explicitly and sometimes implicitly permeated our conduct of international relations."[55]

What prevented Roosevelt from developing a more correct interpretation? There has been a heated debate between those historians who see Stalin's stance as basically defensive and those who interpret his post-1939 foreign policy as expansionist. The latter group, represented by scholars such as Evgenij Gnedin, recognize the inherently aggressive nature of the Stalinist system and see the rapprochement between Germany and the USSR as based not merely on a temporary coincidence of

52. Robert C. Tucker, *Stalin in Power. The Revolution from Above* (New York: Norton, 1990), pp. 46-47.
53. Chuev, *op. cit.*, p. 14.
54. *Ibid.*, p. 90.
55. Vladimir Erofeev, "Ten Years of Secretaryship," *International Affairs* (Moscow), Vol. 9, 1992, p. 109.

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interests but on common aggressive drives and structural affinities between the two systems.[56] As Stalin explained the pact to the British ambassador, "the USSR had wanted to change the old equilibrium . . . England and France had wanted to preserve it. Germany had also wanted to make a change in the equilibrium, and this common desire to get rid of the old equilibrium had created the basis for the rapprochement with Germany."[57] The former group views Stalin's foreign policy after 1939 as predominantly one of avoiding war.[58] Accordingly, Stalin's policy towards Germany and the West was predicated on the classic Leninist assumption that the best way to prevent imperialist aggression against the USSR was by exploiting contradictions in the imperialist camp. A war between Germany and the Western powers would have been the best way of assuring the safety of the USSR.

These two interpretations do not contradict each other if a distinction is made between long-term and short-term policies. The question remains, however, whether Stalin's foreign policy was inherently aggressive or basically defensive. Recently published materials no longer leave any room for the latter option.[59] Stalin's posture was anything but defensive. Stalin never underestimated US economic might, but he always sought to counter it and eventually prevail against the hostile forces of the united West by developing a strong military-industrial complex, a huge army and by constantly expanding the Soviet territory. For Stalin, control over territory was always particularly important.[60]

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56. Elena Aga-Rossi and Victor Zaslavsky, "Evgenij Gnedin come Testimone e Storico del Patto Tedesco-Sovietico," *Storia Contemporanea*, Vo. 18, No. 3 (1987).

57. Quoted in Gerhard Weinberg, "The Nazi-Soviet Pact: A Half-Century Later," in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 68, No. 4, Fall 1989, p. 185.

58. Jonathan Haslam, *The Soviet Union and the Struggle for Collective Security in Europe, 1933-1939* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1984).

59. The most revealing documents on this score are an exchange of telegrams between Molotov in Berlin and Stalin in Moscow, during Molotov's visit to Berlin in November 1940. In this exchange Molotov urgently asks for particular instructions with regard to "China, Turkey and our interests in the Persian Gulf and Arabian Sea." Stalin answers: "1) Do not reveal our main interest in Persia, and say that, possibly, we would not object to the Germans' proposal. 2) About Turkey: keep within the framework of a peaceful settlement in Ribbentrop's spirit, but say a peaceful settlement will not be realistic without our guarantees to Bulgaria and passage of our troops to Bulgaria as a means of pressuring Turkey. 3) Should the Germans suggest a division of Turkey: in that case you may show our cards in the spirit of the directive, using both in the first and second cases the arguments as per the cypher of the Centre. 4) About China: agree with Ribbentrop about a compromise, without revealing the directive as yet." "I shall be pressing on the Black Sea, the Straits and Bulgaria," Molotov dutifully replies. See "On the Eve. Vyacheslav Molotov's Talks in Berlin in November 1940," in *International Affairs* (Moscow), Vol. 9, 1991, pp. 84-85.

60. Djilas recorded his now famous remark: "This war is not as in the past. Whoever

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Conclusions

Neither the essence of Roosevelt's vision of a desirable postwar order nor his conviction that Stalin was the only person capable of changing the Soviet course was in any way naive. Roosevelt's vision was based on the belief that the future would inevitably be organized on the basis of an open market and free enterprise. In this hierarchically structured world, local superpowers would maintain law and order within their respective spheres of influence, while American economic supremacy would guarantee for the US both a preeminent political position and the prevalence of American economic interests.[61] Moreover, Roosevelt was convinced that the USSR would sooner or later be forced to abandon its absurd socioeconomic system, return to a market economy and rejoin the civilized world. It was for this reason, rather than his alleged naiveté or military impotence, that Roosevelt was prepared to accept Soviet domination over half of Europe, long before the 1945 Yalta agreements. Taken by his vision of "a wider and permanent system of general security" which would guarantee, according to the Atlantic Charter, "access on equal terms to the trade and to the raw materials of the world" and the "fullest collaboration between all nations in the economic field with the object of securing, for all, improved labor standards, economic advancement, and social security," Roosevelt was not prepared for the eventuality that the Soviet leaders would flatly refuse to be incorporated into this system and would try to impose by whatever means a totally different postwar order.

Obviously, Roosevelt's misunderstanding of the nature of the Stalinist regime was conditioned by the novelty of the Soviet system and the short historical record of its international conduct. During Roosevelt's lifetime hardly anyone had any knowledge of Soviet-type societies as powerful military complexes whose leadership sought to project military power

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occupies a territory also imposes on it his own social system. Everyone imposes his own system as far as his army can reach. It cannot be otherwise." See Milovan Djilas, *Conversations with Stalin* (New York: Harcourt Brace, 1962), p. 114. To this one can add Molotov's equally emblematic praise of the policy of cutting piece after piece from Europe and adding them to the Soviet camp — the "salami tactic" — as "the best policy we could come up with." See Chuev *op. cit.*, p.104; see also pp. 40; 369; 497-498. This approach was in striking contrast with Roosevelt's opinion that boundaries "do not count in this war. The issue is not and should not be, boundaries and people, but security and employment." See Alan J. P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), p. 397.

61. For a discussion of Roosevelt's economic strategy, see Warren Kimball, "U.S. Economic Strategy in World War II: Wartime Goals, Peacetime Plans," in Warren Kimball, ed., *America Unbound. World War II and the Making of a Superpower* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), pp. 139-158.

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globally and expand that socioeconomic system worldwide.[62] It was known that, under Stalin, while remaining well behind capitalist societies in terms of overall economic development, the USSR had managed to translate an extremely high proportion of its national product into military power. This could be easily explained as a reaction to an emergency war situation. Still, the Roosevelt administration failed to be alerted by Stalin's attachment to territorial gains and by his record of annexing neighbors' territories at the first opportunity.

During WWII the USSR rapidly evolved into a military superpower. Roosevelt did not fail to register this fact, but never wavered from his belief that he could reach an understanding with Stalin. Many leading members of his administraton, from Davies to Harriman to Hopkins to Wallace remained fascinated with the Soviet experiment.[63] Since the USSR was seen as an ordinary nation-state, Soviet interests were only partially identified. Consequently, during WWII Roosevelt inadvertently contributed to the creation of an international environment conducive to Soviet postwar expansion.[64]

US plans to "eschew isolationism and imperialism and set an example of international cooperation in a world ripe for US leadership"[65] stood in stark contrast with the Stalinist vision of a relentless struggle between two camps and two opposed socioeconomic systems. WWII victory reinforced the particular structure of Soviet society with the military-industrial complex occupying center stage in the economy and consuming an ever greater share of the country's resources. It bolstered Stalin's self-confidence and confirmed his belief concerning the intrinsic superiority of the Soviet over the Western system.

Stalin, Molotov and other Marxist-Leninists of that generation saw Roosevelt's plan for the postwar order as a typical imperialist program

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62. Andrew Janos, "Social Science, Communism, and the Dynamics of Political Change," in *World Politics*, Vol. 44, No. 1 (October 1991), pp. 81-112.

63. In describing Harriman, one of Roosevelt's main advisors on Soviet affairs, Heilbrunn, concludes that "Harriman was incapable of comprehending or predicting the actions of the Soviet state, because his emotional and intellectual limitations blinded him to the true character of the totalitarian state." See Jacob Heilbrunn, "The Playboy of the Western World," *The New Republic* (July 27, 1992), p. 57. See also Rudy Abramson, *Spanning the Century: The Life of W. Averell Harriman. 1891-1986* (Boston: William Morrow, 1992) and Charles Bohlen, *Witness to History, 1929-1969* (New York: Norton, 1973).

64. As Molotov put it, "They [Western leaders] miscalculated, since they were not Marxists and we were. But having lost half of Europe they then returned to their senses." See Chuev, *op. cit.*, p. 67.

65. David Reynolds, "Power and Superpower: The Impact of Two World Wars on America's International Role," in Kimball, *America Unbound*, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

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aimed at world domination and the destruction of socialism. As Eroleev reports, the Soviet part had no illusions concerning the possibility of a continuous collaboration after the war, since "the seeds of the Cold War between the members of the anti-Hitler coalition had always been present." Their irreconcilable contradictions had never disappeared but were only temporarily suppressed to facilitate the struggle against the common enemy.[66] There was never any objective foundation for a friendly postwar cooperation between a Stalinist USSR and a capitalist US.

Thus Roosevelt's vision of a postwar European order based on a lasting peaceful collaboration with the USSR was untenable. The Soviet leaders knew that they operated in a bipolar world even before it actually emerged. Moreover, they were deeply convinced that peaceful coexistence between the two systems was strictly temporary.[67] In dealing with the Stalinist leadership, Roosevelt's belief in his charisma, his faith in personal diplomacy and the conviction that he would be able to win over the Soviet leaders by friendly approach, frankness and sheer flattery were particularly misplaced.[68] This attitude was often perceived by Stalin and Molotov as a sign of weakness or deceit.[69]

Assessing Roosevelt and his policies in light of the "velvet revolution" in Eastern Europe, Schlesinger argues that the true sense of the Yalta agreements is the Eastern Europe which has emerged after the 1989 revolution, not the one which has been dominated by the Soviet Union for a half century: "In the long run . . . Roosevelt anticipated a narrowing of differences, a measure of convergence, between democratic and communist societies . . . . This anticipation looks a good deal less foolish in 1990 than it did, say, in 1950."[70] There are two basic

66. "Kruglyi stol v MID SSSR" [A Roundtable in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the USSR], in *Novaya i noveishaya istoriya*, No. 5 (1991), p. 85.

67. F. Chuev, *op. cit.*, pp. 40, 369, 497 and 498.

68. Thus at Yalta, Roosevelt and his inner circle of advisors were convinced that Roosevelt "dominated Winston Churchill more completely than before; Joseph Stalin was likewise prepared to heed [Roosevelt's] counsel, to accept [Roosevelt's] solutions." See Roosevelt, *As He Saw It*, *op. cit.*, p. 241.

69. According to Chuev, Molotov comparing Churchill and Roosevelt as leaders showed a grumbling respect toward Churchill as "the strongest and ablest" of all Western leaders, noting that Churchill correctly anticipated the threat which the victorious Soviet Union would pose for Great Britain and the West after the war. See Chuev, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 67, 71, 75 and 77. By contrast, Molotov's attitude toward Roosevelt was often contemptous. A "courteous man" who skillfully concealed his true feelings, Roosevelt remained for Molotov a "hardened imperialist" and "scoundrel" who believes "only in dollars" and made concessions in the vain hope of outsmarting the Bolsheviks in the long run. See Chuev, *op. cit.*, pp. 76, 81 and 101.

70. Schlesinger, *op. cit.*, p. 16.

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problems with this evaluation. First, ignoring that what has happened is not a convergence but a collapse of the Soviet system, Schlesinger glosses over the most serious shortcoming of Roosevelt's foreign policy: a misinterpretation of the nature of the Soviet system. Second, Schlesinger's claim that a leader should be judged by the longterm consequences of his policies while the length of the period in question exceeds a life-span of two or more generations is not very helpful. Roosevelt himself planned his policy not for posterity, but for the foreseeable future, i.e., for the two or three decades remaining for his, Stalin's and Churchill's generation.[71] Roosevelt's instincts about the ultimate shortcomings of the Soviet system were correct, but his timing was definitely wrong.

71. Sherwood, *op. cit.*, p. 560. See also Willard Range, *Franklin D. Roosevelt's World Order* (Athens, GE: University of Georgia Press, 1959), p. 47.

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The League and the Crisis of Italian Politics

Sebastiana Pileri, Oliver Schmidtke, Carlo Ruzza

Protest groups are important political agencies, but their role is limited by their relatively short-lived organizational forms. Their integration into institutionalized decision-making processes has often proven difficult. Thus their impact tends to be restricted to raising public awareness to particular issues rather than playing a direct political role. This is why usually these groups are not taken seriously as major agencies of change, relegated to epiphenomena of a crisis and regulatory mechanisms of "normal politics." Even when they successfully question the dominant policy-making framework, these groups remain marginal and tend to vanish as soon as their causes are either integrated into establishment politics or, more likely, the public simply looses interest in the issues they address. At best, they are catalysts in the transformation of decision-making processes.

With very few exceptions, this is how the Italian Northern League has been perceived: a protest group capitalizing on the corrupt clientelistic practices of the Italian political establishment. After its first spectacular electoral successes, it seemed to merely articulate a diffuse dissatisfaction with the political class. Thus it was assumed that the League would eventually dissipate like so many other earlier political outbursts. Normally such groups are contained or repressed by authorities (e.g., New Left demonstrations). If a protest movement becomes so successful as to jeopardize established political interests, however, existing political forces attempt to incorporate the grievances into their own agenda by simultaneously appropriating and and appeasing rebellious claims (e.g., environmental issues). Thus there are two possible institutional strategies: one repressive; the other cooptative. Rarely do protest

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groups change the political culture and even more rarely do they become major political forces.

The League has not followed this pattern and has become not only the strongest political force in Northern Italy (replacing the Italian Socialists as the third major party in Italy) but also a driving political agency in planning a radical reform of Italian political institutions. In so doing, it has turned from a protest movement into a responsible local political organization seeking participation in national government. It has become the leading force in the transformation of the political system it had previously attacked from outside. Thus the League represents an exceptional case in which "system opposition" has become integrated into the changing institutional political framework.

What accounts for the League's success? How did it manage, within ten short years, to grow so fast and become so influential? What made possible its transformation from a separatist regional movement into a national political force? Is its success an idiosyncratic Italian phenomenon or does it prefigure a broader trend? Sidney Tarrow has listed four features determining the success of mobilization efforts: 1) access to political institutions; 2) stability of political bonds (to parties) among the population; 3) powerful allies; 4) splits within the elite.[1] With the exception of the third point (the League remains isolated), the situation in Italy has been and is characterized by conditions highly favorable to mobilization. Before dealing with how the Northern League has managed to cope with the contradictions of institutionalization, it is necessary to briefly summarize the recent history of the Italian political crisis.

The Italian Revolution

Recently Italian politics has received considerable media coverage.[2] *The Economist*, Umberto Eco and *The Independent* all see these events as "a revolution."[3] In the last few months the Italian political system has

1. Sidney Tarrow, *Democracy and Disorder. Protest and Politics in Italy 1965-75* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989); and "Struggle, Politics and Reform. Social Movements and Policy Change During Cycles of Protest," in *Western Societies Papers*, No. 22 (1989).

2. See "Italians Face the End of the Good Life," in *The Independent on Sunday* (1993), pp. 14; "L'Operation *Mains Propres*" in *Liberation* (February '23, 1993), p. 19; "The Tangle in Italy" in *The Economist* (February 20-26, 1993), 'p. 13; "Italia: Il Mal Politico Venuto dal Sud," in *Il Corriere della Sera* (April 15, 1993) p. 31; "Una Vecchia Italia va in Frantumi," in *L'Unità* (1993), p. 2; "Basta coi Trucchi, ora Siamo Europei" (1993), p. 20; "Tempo di Crisi e di Canzoni, la Rivoluzione Morbida," in *Il Corriere della Sera* (February 26, 1993), 'p. 1; "Aiutiamo i Giudici, Stanno Cambiando l'Italia" in *Il Corriere della Sera* (April 24, 1993), p. 1.

3. An editorial of the *The Economist* argued that in Italy "a revolution is happening

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undergone radical changes. The entire political class that ruled the country for over forty-five years is under attack; many of its members are being investigated for corruption or, even worse, for collusion with the Mafia (Andreotti) and other criminal organizations (the *Camorra* in Campania and the *'Ndrangheta* in Calabria).

In the April 18, 1993 referenda, Italians opted for major political reforms. By an overwhelming majority (82.7%) they rejected the old electoral system based on proportional representation. They also voted to end state funding of political parties (90.3%), to abolish state bank nominations and three key ministries: tourism, state participation and agriculture (89.8%). This was a clear mandate for substantial reforms and it showed "how a civilized nation can change its own political system constitutionally and without bloodshed. As the chief campaigner for reform, Segni pointed out such changes usually happen only after wars or totalitarian rule."[4] Now the entire political system is undergoing massive transformation. New political parties and movements have been formed. The League in the North, the *Rete* in the South and the recently formed *Alleanza Democratica* are all growing very rapidly. The main ruling Christian Democratic Party (DC) is in the midst of a huge shake up. Just before resigning, in his April 22, 1993 speech to Parliament, former Prime Minister Giuliano Amato spoke about the end of a regime. The pervasive corruption scandal known as *Tangentopoli* is seen roughly on the same scale as the Algerian crisis: it calls into question the foundations of the First Republic. The mechanism of this corruption was simple: politicians received bribes, called *tangenti*, in return for favors, particularly concerning the award of large public contracts to build roads, hospitals, etc. It is not altogether clear who was corrupting whom, although suspicion falls heavily on politicians. It did not involve only a few corrupt people, but an entire system based on extensive illegal transactions. Politicians were financing their huge party machines (about one million Italians work in politics), but substantial sums were also

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in slow motion but nonetheless, in the heart of Western Europe, an entire political order is collapsing." See the February 20, 1993 issue. According to Eco, "Italians are now living day by day their July 14, 1789. An old Regime is delegitimated and one by one its men are falling." See *L'Espresso* (February 23, 1993). For *The Independent*, "the Italian revolution may be peaceful, but it is ugly, frightening, sometimes tragic, sometimes unfair, and deeply destabilising" Since, however, it is Italy "it is also exhilarating — bringing hopes of purification of public life, self-respect and good government — as long as the country can survive the turmoil." See *The Independent* (February 28, 1993).

4. See *The Independent* (April 24, 1993).

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being diverted for private use. Only a third of the money went to parties, another third to various go-betweens and the rest to politicians, particularly big bosses, through secret Swiss bank accounts. The scandals have repeatedly rocked the government and sent the lira diving. It is a political and economic earthquake.

The role of the "party system" has been crucial in generating the current crisis. The post-war Italian state was shaped by the constitution written after WWII. To allay fears of a resurgence of authoritarianism, the 1946 Constituent Assembly fashioned a very fragmented political power structure, which was superimposed on the fascist centralized state. The absence of a majority premium promoted the emergence of a fragmented political system with numerous parties. In addition, the Italian constitution institutionalized real bicameralism and a presidency with rather limited powers. The result was a political stalemate, making it impossible to run parliament by strict majority rule. Not powerful enough to rule through democratic channels, the DC undertook a systematic "colonization" of state institutions. Influential people were placed at the head of most powerful institutions such as the Central Bank, the *Cassa per il Mezzogiorno*, and local administrations. The state was then used as a powerful machine to generate political consent based on pervasive clientelism.

Fragmentation promoted a policy of patronage which, while blocking broad institutional reforms, promoted a system of political exchange based on a multitude of clientelistic laws. Party penetration of institutions was carried out and supported by the political domination and expansion of the parastate. The state-owned sector of the economy reached massive proportions in the 1950s, offering an additional powerful tool to exercise influence and finance the DC and other parties. As a consequence, parties became crucial.[5] This system survived until February 17, 1992 when Mario Chiesa, the Socialist President of the *Pio Albergo Trivulzio* (a Milanese charity for the elderly) was arrested with 7 million lire ($5,600) taken from the owner of a cleaning service. It was the first half of a $11,200 kick-back for having awarded a contract to clean the hospital. But unlike several other similar incidents, it did not

5. According to *The Economist* "Italy resembled communist Eastern democracies in that nothing was so important as party connections. Patronage was king. Bigger jobs, bigger pensions, industrial companies, television stations — all were parcelled out by *lottizzazione*, the practice of rewarding parties according to their support at the most recent elections. Since all the parties were involved to some degree, none had an interest in changing the system." Cf. "The Tangle in Italy," *op. cit.*, p. 13.

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end quickly. The case was vigorously pursued and led to many similar investigations. The judge, Antonio Di Pietro (at the time a little known member of Milan's Public Prosecutor's staff and now a national hero), started the so-called "*Operazione Mani Pulite*" (Operation Clean Hands). What he learned from Chiesa's confession led to a series of investigations that in time indicted the entire political system.

According to the *BBC*,[6] more than 2000 people were under investigation: 3 party secretaries (the Socialist leader Bettino Craxi, the Social Democrat Vizzini, and the Republican La Malfa), 9 ministers of previous cabinets, 46 members of parliament and 12 Senators, 192 local administrators, and 198 businessmen. 146 people have been arrested, 16 trillion lire (over $10,5 billions) in kickbacks have been uncovered over a period of 15 years, 7 people have committed suicide and 3 cabinet Ministers have resigned (the Liberal Health Minister, De Lorenzo, the DC Finance Minister, Goria, and the Socialist Minister of Justice, Martelli). Two top Fiat executives have also been arrested. As time goes by there is growing disenchantment with this revolution. The old parliament has not yet been dissolved, despite having been discredited. New arrests are becoming the tedious conclusion of all daily news. Yet the desire for real change is now stronger than ever, as a sense of impatience pervades public opinion.

A fundamental question is why this chain of events took place when it did, considering that vested interests had successfully stifled previous attempts to uncover political corruption. A major cause was the collapse of communism and the end of the Cold War. Because of its geopolitical position in the middle of the Mediterranean, Italy was a crucial link between East and West. The US supported the DC and the USSR financed the Italian Communist Party (PCI). With the end of the Soviet Union there was no further need for the US to finance the DC and other small parties of the unusually large number of coalition governments which ruled Italy. The DC depended heavily on outside financial support. Funds were needed to keep the well-oiled machine of vote-trading operating. For instance, in some areas of the South there was a standard fee for votes to be paid in cash or, when a sufficiently large number of votes were delivered, to provide public resources such as subsidized housing. Outside influences were probably crucial to keep the system working. The US justification for supporting the DC was to prevent the strongest communist party in Europe from taking

6. BBC News, Radio 4 (October 31, 1993).

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power. Most Italians also tolerated the massive corruption to prevent communists from taking power. "Hold your nose and vote Christian Democrat" was the advice of a leading political commentator, Indro Montanelli, before the 1976 political elections. After the fall of the Berlin wall, however, Italians began to vote for the Lombard League — a development considered crucial in the launching of the inquiry into *Tangentopoli* since, allegedly, Milanese judges took this to mean that public opinion would no longer tolerate corruption.

Italy and Europe

Italian politicians have always used Europe as an excuse for introducing unpopular bills. Thus they have been able to address the immediate problem of a huge public deficit and the discrepancy of development between North and South by using the Maastricht Treaty as a pretext. This treaty and the tight monetary policy it imposes were seen by most politicians as Italy's last chance to modernize and join the more efficient North European countries. In fact the very launching of the Milan inquiry has been seen as coming indirectly from Brussels, as the EC influence expands. Closer scrutiny by the EC Commission from the late 1980s, combined with efforts to create a single European market, forced the Italian public sector to become more open. If business and industry were to be competitive in the EC, they could no longer afford the hidden costs of political kickbacks. As the top manager at Fiat put it in an open letter to *Il Corriere della Sera* titled "Let us Help the Judges, They are Changing Italy," entrepreneurs and businessmen ought to denounce the requests of corrupt politicians. If previously industrialists would have exerted pressure to halt the magistrates' inquiry, this was no longer the case after European competition made the costs of kickbacks prohibitive. It was no longer sufficient to keep competitors from bidding on public contracts: now it was necessary to be efficient. Another factor contributing to the change is that the EC is not interested in financing useless projects such as roads that nobody uses, tunnels that end in open countryside, or other pork-barrel projects, as has been the case with most of the public projects financed by the Italian state. EC directives requiring centralized audits and closer monitoring of public expenditures have contributed to clean up public contracts as more EC resources were channelled to underdeveloped regions

As the Italian situation unravels, it is difficult to assess the long term implications. In any event, as Paul Ginsborg, a British historian, pointed out in an interview in *L'Unità* (the former PCI newspaper), it is clear that

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until recently the Italian revolution was more cultural than structural. It was supported by public opinion but fiercely resisted by all institutions, including the Catholic Church. Consequently, he rejects the term "revolution" and uses instead the designation "democratic restoration" to characterize recent events. The advocates of this "democratic restoration," Milan's and Palermo's Public Prosecutors, are civil servants with no political ambitions but only the willingness to apply existing laws. Since they are a minority, it remains to be seen whether they will be left on a limb by other judges (as Italians put it: "delegitimated") or whether they will be able to form alliances not only with other social sectors but also with parts of the state apparatus. So far, public opinion indicates that the judges are not isolated. Yet there is a danger that society will leave reforms to the justice system. Another risk is that, since the judiciary takes so long to reach a final verdict, support for reforms will gradually abate. At that point the old system may deploy its powerful institutional resources to survive. The old party system will fight hard to maintain its privileges (e.g., parliamentary immunity, as can be seen by the recent vote not to authorize the arrest of ex-Minister De Lorenzo) and a new system is not yet ready or is too fragile to replace the old one.

Even more problematic is the fact that the opposition to the old is too fragmented to gain strong electoral support. A whole generation of Italians refused to enter politics during the 1980s. Consequently, there is a lack of leadership to replace the old corrupt political class. Recent events, however, are permanently altering the system. The cultural revolution is about to turn into a structural one after Italians voted to change the electoral system and parliament approved the change towards a first-past-the post system for the senate as well as for the lower chamber (*Camera dei Deputati*). While the implementation of the reform may be delayed, conditions for the parties' struggle for power have already changed substantially and permanently.

The ruling class has not been delegitimated only by the recent crisis. The traditional fissure between society and the ruling class in Italy has only been intensified by recent events. In this respect the rise of the League took place precisely when the old elites were no longer able to maintain their "business as usual" outlook as during previous legitimation crises. The League's criticism of national political parties and, more generally, of an overblown bureaucracy and public industrial sector, made a political alternative feasible. Such possibilities had not been considered in a system based on a tacit agreement between the old political elites, regardless of party affiliation. Calls for regional self-determination

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provided an agenda beyond old cleavages, thus overcoming cynicism towards politics, mobilizing formerly depoliticized groups even if still unable to replace the discredited political class.[7]

As a result of extensive electoral reforms and a solid representation in parliament, the League has obtained the means to become very influential. Consequently, like all social movements in the process of becoming institutionalized, the League is now facing the vital question of how to sustain its impressive level of mobilization. It is confronted with the paradoxical predicament of attracting people for opportunistic reasons, especially old political elites used to the corrupt and clientelistic practices of traditional Italian politics. This threatens its attractiveness to the broader electorate. To minimize the risk of falling back into old practices, League politicians generally are not recruited from the old "political class" but from among "normal citizens."[8] Furthermore, the League's proposal for regional self-determination and decentralization has become attractive because it transcends the struggles between the two dominant ideologies: Catholicism and Marxism. With its growing participation in public administration, however, it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a commitment to an absolute opposition against parties and the state. The Northern League can survive integration into the political system only if it can show that it has changed the "rules of the game." The real struggle in Italy today is among groups seeking to represent the "new" in a changing institutional framework. Thus the League is no longer competing only with discredited politicians. Now, even established parties have realized that the only way to survive is by claiming to support radical political reforms. In this respect Italy resembles East European countries where the only credible political groups are those claiming to have nothing in common with the old nomenclature.[9]

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7. See Carlo Ruzza and Oliver Schmidtke, "The 'Making of the Lombard League," in *Telos* 90 (Winter 1991-92).

8. Especially on a city level the League seeks to stress its own identity in opposition to professional politicians. Ordinary citizens never previously active in politics are beginning to take adminstrative responsibilities.

9. Not surprisingly, a new generation with "a clean record" has superseded former leaders in all major parties. It is against this background of a self-renovating establishment that the League must defend its claim to present the only "real" alternative to the "old." In this context, the Former Communist Party has become a particularly effective competitor by emphasizing decentralization and generally appropriating the League's political agenda. This is the very essence of the League's success: its ability to articulate widespread dissatisfaction with the old élite. See Carlo Ruzza and Oliver Schmidtke, "Roots of Success in the Lega Lombarda: Mobilization Dynamics and the Media," in *West European Politics*, Vol. 16, No. 2 (April 1993), p.1-23.

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Conclusions

Two apparently related features need to be distinguished in the transformation of the Northern League into a national political force: the ideological adaptation to current strategic needs and a corresponding new organizational structure. Both changes pose new challenges to the League's mobilizing efforts. It has realized that, because of restrictions on mobilization, a traditional regionalist outlook no longer meets its aspirations. Thus its major goal is being broadened from a vague separatist focus into a project of "federalizing" the entire country. Notwithstanding its rhetorical opposition, the League is now increasingly willing to cooperate with factions of the dominant political establishment. Often in association with former communists on the municipal level and in national politics, it has given up its intransigent opposition. Its leaders have realized that the only way to overcome isolation and the resulting political impotence in national politics is by cooperating with other parties.[10] The need to keep protest alive and at the same time achieve results forces the League to act in two different roles. Its leader, Umberto Bossi, is still the agitator fighting for the federalist "revolution" but he also has adopted the role of a prudent statesman guiding events in the prospect of a peaceful transformation of the country's political system. So far the League has been unable to attract even minimal support in the South. Similarly, in Tuscany, a traditionally communist stronghold, the League's breakthrough has yet to come.

The recent decision to change its name to The Italian Federal League (*Lega Italia Federale*) is an attempt to remedy this situation by transcending territorial origins. Its Southern branch, the *Lega Sud*, has been organizationally strengthened; ideologically the League now emphasizes that the "universal" principle of regional self-determination is the answer to the country's numerous but territorially diverse problems. Thus it has acknowledged that its separatist proposals to split Italy into three macroregions were primarily a provocation against Rome. Although in so doing it has removed the major programmatic obstacle for further expansion, it has not yet managed to overcome hostility in Southern Italy.

Old elites are fighting with all their means to retain power. To some extent, they have been successful in delaying, if not undermining, structural reform. In a chaotic climate still dominated by the old regime,

10. When the League's leadership first contemplated joining a local coalition with the DC there was an outcry among its members. Since the League claims to be fundamentally different from other parties, a coalition with these political forces was seen as a betrayal of the organization's central political goal.

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with a delegitimated parliament and scattered terroristic bombings, the League will increasingly play the role of the main agency of change. The crucial threshold of its integration into state institutions and its entanglement within state policy-making will occur after the next general election, likely to be held in early 1994. Meanwhile, the situation is likely to deteriorate further as other institutions are suspected of involvement in newly discovered corruption scandals. In the last few months bankers and secret services have become the subject of new waves of investigations. Police and several judges have been accused of association with the Mafia and similar criminal organizations in other regions. Even financial journalists,[11] university professors and new state television managers ironically just recently appointed to free the service from parties' intrusion contributed in hiding corruption for personal gains.[12]

Indignation can be discerned clearly in the results of municipal elections held November 21, 1993 in several cities.[13] The traditional ruling parties collapsed: the Socialist Party was decimated and DC support was greatly reduced. Where the League did not already have a strong base, such as in Rome and Naples, the neo-fascists made significant gains while the traditional Left — the reformed ex-communist Party of the Left — did not decline and in some areas actually grew. This has brought about a polarization of the Italian electorate and a massive erosion of the political center. The League has held its gains, and made some advances in several northern cities, but it has not triumphed the way it did in the past. This slowing of its advances cannot be automatically transposed at a national level as the political context of mayoral and national elections are very different. However, these results indicate the League's persistent difficulty in appealing to a broader electorate beyond its traditional strongholds in the North. A strong regionalist identity is not easily manufactured and exported, especially when perceptions or economic interests run in a different direction (as they do in the South, where people used to expect protection from a powerful centralized state).

Other factors have hindered the League. In the recently approved

11. Thus, four journalists have been suspended from the Association of Journalists, one has been reprimended and two expelled. See "Lombardfin, Radiati Due Giornalisti," in *Corriere della Sera(November 24, 1993)*.

12. See "The Rot Bites Deeper into Italy," in *The Economist* (Oct. 29, 1993), Vol. 329, No. 7834, pp. 4546. For a discussion of the role of a university professor implicated in corruption scandals in the health system, see G. Marino, "Il Ciclone Poggiolini sui Politici Eccellenti, in *La Repubblica* (October 27, 1993), p. 7.

13. For a summary of the results, see "Un Voto Terremoto — Riepilogo Nazionale," in *La Republica* (November 22, 1993), p. 2.

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first-past-the-post system for mayoral elections, the ability to form broad alliances to support a candidate and the public recognition of candidates are essential. The League is held back by the ostracism to which it has been subjected by all other political groups. It is forced either to win by a landslide or lose. This inability to compromise is largely the consequence of the novelty of the League's project. As Colletti has observed, the League "understands the problem of rediscussing from scratch the terms of a new social contract. None of the other parties fully perceive the necessity of radical institutional reforms, the necessity to rebuild the state on a new basis."[14] The League's isolation has also been the result of its populist style and the hyperbolic slogans that have cemented its support among the uneducated electorate of northern Italian villages. Secondly, the League's program needs to be better articulated. As Colletti notes, the rallying call for *federalism* is welcome since it indicates a need for a new constitution and a new state organization, but so far it has not been spelled out in terms of its practical implications and risks to appear vague to an educated public. Thirdly, as a relative new formation the League does not have a class of competent administrators and intellectuals sufficiently well known and ready to take on complex political roles.

A new "political class" is essential to sustain the desire and competence necessary to create more transparent institutional mechanisms. Aware of these challenges, the League has attempted to prepare for a governing role. As many of its leaders are not members of the ruling elite, they lack the necessary formal training. Following Bossi's suggestion, many recently elected MPs have enrolled in college courses. Bossi himself has recently begun to study law. Whether a new credible and competent ruling class can be formed quickly — not just by the League, but by other new political forces as well — is the major challenge on which hangs the regeneration of Italian politics.

In general, the issue of formal political training is important for European regionalist movements. Political newcomers unfamiliar with the system of formal education have often been ostracized wherever a university educated national bourgeosie and intellectual class have had their identities constituted in opposition to regional cultures. The exception were leftist parties, which more than any other promoted uneducated people to leadership positions. But even for them, strong regional identities were a suspect breach of proletarian solidarity. Thus, regardless

14. Lucio Colletti, "Voragine al Centro," in *Il Corriere della Sera* (November 20, 1993).

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of specific differences on the Right-Left axis, European politicians and intellectuals have traditionally opposed local identities, which were perceived as parochial and obsolete. This perception is reinforced by the marks of regional identities, such as non-standard accents. But as much of the stigma of regional belonging is fading, the challenge for the cadres of regionalist movements is to acquire the necessary legal and political competence to operate effectively, without acquiring the undesiderable cultural traits to which regionalism reacts. In the Italian case it is the culture of illegality that has to be rejected.

Cultural change, however, is taking place not only in the League but everywhere, accelerated by the public's perception of having been conned, by a sense of anger at the plundering of public resources and a sense of shame in living in what increasingly appears as a "banana republic."[15] The major consequence of the frenzy of accusations and counter-accusations among former "untouchables" is citizens' trust.[16] It is their resentment about having been treated for so long as pawns in a game where no one seemed to know the rules. Resentment also emerges, pitching one sector of the economy against another, both in terms of deciding who is responsible for the current problems and who should pay for their solution. For instance, some resentment emerges about the relative impunity that the financial sector has so far enjoyed, despite its frequent collusion with corrupt politicians. Accusations point to the active role that the businesses involved in public contracts often took in conspiring with politicians to the detriment of competitors, and the widespread illegalities in the stock exchange to the detriment of small investors. More generally, there is increasing awareness that the global fabric of Italian capitalism is no longer economically viable and ethically acceptable. To many, the current state of economic recession is directly linked to the previous frauds.

These resentments are difficult to address. The "hands off" approach the League is advocating for the economy might not make things easier. Without regulation and repression, old practices are not easily changed, and yet regulative approaches would perpetuate the existence of the over-expanded and over-powerful state that has sustained corruption. Despite these difficulties, the League's appeal is not likely to decline. It is based on a territorial identity which appears more credible, somehow more "basic" and therefore un-mediated than that of the nation-state.

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15. See *Panorama* (October 26, 1993).

16. See Norberto Bobbio. "La Democrazia ha Bisogno di Fiducia," in *La Stampa* (October 31, 1993), p. 1.

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To understand this attractiveness one has to consider the ideological nature of the idea of community. Clearly, both the nation-state and the region as territorially defined identities ground their appeal in similar utopian visions and socio-psychological processes. They utilize analogous legitimating resources, such as a comparable symbolism. Regionalism, though, calls into question the authority of the nation-state; it is in its very essence based on opposition to the nation-state. Other regionalist claims are organized around the same politics, arguing that belonging to a territorially delimited community provides better social integration and political representation.

Unlike the discredited European nation-states, however, the region still provides some political inspiration. The success of territorial movements and parties depends on their ability to interpret cleavages in contemporary society, convincingly incorporate these issues into their political identities and address emerging grievances. The notion of a territorial community sustains feelings of solidarity and belonging. This is all the more the case because of the dominance of the crude market liberalism which shaped the 1980s' political climate. The disintegration of welfare state ideologies, and the concomitant reinforcement of new-right principles have contributed to the widespread notion that contraposes society and community as two profoundly distinct opposites. The territorially defined community as a reference point of protest is correspondingly portrayed as shaped by the opposition between internal solidarity and alienating external forces. While community is an extension of the family, society is the "jungle out there." In this sense, the region can be readily perceived as a cohesive entity where common cultural traits such as linguistic or religious particularities testify to a sense of common belonging that the nation-state can no longer claim. Thus the consequence of a redefined antagonism between individual and society is a shift of the charismatic element of political ideals from the nation-state to the region, with a consequent reorientation of loyalties.

The delegitimation of nation-states is not a new phenomenon, but recent developments have accelerated it. At a broad level, the political realm has expanded[17] to incorporate issues not easily regulated at the national level, e.g., gender issues, or reactions to immigration. These are often better perceived as local, such as many environmental issues. In this context, the nation-state appears too distant and inappropriate to

17. See Charles S. Mayer, ed., *The Changing Boundaries of the Political* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

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provide answers. In Europe, the erosion of sovereignty by the European Community has left the nation-states diminished. Thus in France parliament spends 60% of its time transposing EC legislation into French law.[18] This shift of sovereignty has triggered ambivalent reactions ranging from fears of a bureaucratic European super-state to an enthusiastic embrace of federalism. Furthermore, the European dream has been tarnished in the drawn-out process of ratification of the Maastricht Treaty.

Current reactions to the Maastricht malaise are fashioning a Europe with a weak center, possibly unable to provide the inspiration of the early post-war European dream but also unlikely to spark strong hostile reactions. It is at the local level that new allegiances develop. Most European states have long had clearly defined regional identities, which the decline of nation-states simply brings to the fore. Even if the European ideal resurfaces, regional identity can complement a federal Europe in a way that national identity cannot. It is in this context that the reference to smaller political units has become crucial. The idea of a "Europe of regions," though presently only a catchphrase, marks a break from present organizational principles of political representation, while being clearly not a return to pre-modern ones. Regionalism, beyond the particular case of the League, represents a pledge to intensified democratic participation. With the inauguration of the new European Union on November 1, 1993, European regions gained a more powerful political role in most European countries with the creation of the new *Committee of Regions*. There is a general tendency to handing greater power to local governments. In this respect only Britain constitutes a clear exception.[19] But regional political clout, already substantial in the German *Länder* system and in Belgium, is growing in Spain and will soon grow in Italy after the next elections strengthen the League. Even in hypercentralized states such as France, financial and decision-making powers of elected local governments have grown in recent years.

Like other regionalist movements, the League has been facilitated by the severity of a legitimacy crisis unique in Western Europe. In general, protesters identify smaller societal units promising redress of grievances perpetrated by nation-states and possibly a solution to social fragmentation and the dissolution of old political alignments. In this respect, the League is the potential interpreter of a new political agenda with explosive ramifications for established national parties. Its meteoric

18. See *Le Monde Diplomatique* (October 1993), p. 18.

19. See Leonard Doyle "Britain Refuses to Loosen Reins on Regional Power," in *The Independent* (November 1, 1993).

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rise and the far-reaching institutional reforms that accompanied it suggests that the widespread critique of the "political class" in Western societies is not merely a function of an increasingly limited participation in politics by large sectors of the population. Populist unrest shows a passion for politics and reveals a growing potential for protest by sectors of the population no longer integrated into "normal politics" but determined to be heard. In this sense what is happening in Western Europe (and recently in Canada, with the massive support for the separatist program in Quebec) may be only the beginning of a general trend that will radically alter politics everywhere — a trend that could sweep a more integrated American continent after the implementation of NAFTA.

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Hermes-Hestia: The Hearth and the Angel as a Philosophical Paradigm

Sergio Benvenuto

The Greeks worshipped Hestia and Hermes. In addition to being the name of a goddess, Hestia was also a noun designating the domestic hearth (or the city's common hearth) and was often associated with Hermes.[1] It referred to the circular hearth in the ground: the navel which rooted the house to the earth. As Vernant points out,[2] Hestia the goddess was the symbol of permanence. Since she was a fixed center defining human space, philosophers identified her with the core of a Cosmos within which the whole Earth was the fixed hearth of the universe. Hestia did not intermingle but remained chaste: like Athena and Artemis, she was a virgin.[3]

Hermes also lived among mortals,[4] but as Angelos, the messenger, always ready to leave. "Nothing about him is settled, stable, permanent, or definite. He represents movement and flow, mutation and transition, contacts among foreign elements. In the house, his place is

1. Literally, as the Homeric *Hymn to Hestia* put it: "You both live in the beautiful dwelling places of humans who reside on the surface of the earth, with feelings of mutual friendship." See Mario Vegetti, in *aut aut*, (July-October 1987), No. 220-21, pp. 35-45.

2. Jean-Pierre Vernant, "Hestia-Hermes. The Religious Expression of Space and Movement in Ancient Greece," in Jean-Pierre Vernant, *Myth and Thought among the Greeks* (London, Boston: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1983), pp. 127-175.

3. When in *Cratylus* Plato traces the etymology of Hestia, he links it to *ousia*, also called *essia*: "fixed and immutable essence." See Plato, *Cratylus* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), tr. by H. N. Fowler, 401 c-e, pp. 65-67.

4. As Zeus indicates: "more than all the gods, you love the mortals' companionship." *The Iliad of Homer* (Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press, 1951), tr. by Richard Lattimore, Book XIV, Part I, pp. 334-5.

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at the door, protecting the threshold, repelling thieves because he is himself a thief . . . for whom there are neither locks, barricades or frontiers."[5] He could be found around city gates, intersections, state borders and tombs (the gateways to the other world), i.e., wherever human beings, away from home, met for the purpose of exchanges or sports competition. He was the public announcer, an errant god and the lord of the road. He introduced the seasons and controlled awakening and sleeping — even dying. Thus Hermes was both elusive and ubiquitous.[6] He carried a magic wand which transformed all he touched. He could neither be predicted nor held: he was chance, good or bad luck, unexpected encounters. Hestia's domain was the internal, the closed, the fixed, the inward. This is how Hestia assured continuity. The domain of Hermes, on the other hand, was the external, the open and the mobile.

The Occlusion of Hestia

Various related figures of the Greco-Roman pantheon, such as Apollo-Dionysus, Eros-Thanatos or the Muses have inspired the conceptualization of the Christian and the modern world. The dialectical pair Hestia-Hermes, however, has been ignored. Only Hermes has been remembered. Today the terms "hermetism" and "hermetic" are used without reference to Hestia. It is not by accident, however, that hermetism has come to mean roughly the opposite of what Hermes meant to the Greeks. Today it refers to closed knowledge, neither communicable nor communicated, i.e., knowledge not subject to public control. That Hermes ended up taking over the meaning of his "goddess friend" testifies all the more to the interconnectedness.

Yet this bond between Hestia and Hermes indicates a persistent polarity in Western civilization. If modern times could have chosen to inherit one thing from paganism, it would have been the god Hermes. Modernity would have been adequately represented by this worldly god. Openness, mobility, trade, business, perpetual innovation — all of these hermetic characteristics also characterize modern man. What is today's relentless cult of progress but the apotheosis of a divine messenger's chronic instability, never pausing and always ready to depart?

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5. Vernant , *op. cit.*, p. 129.

6. See "On Garrulousness," in *Selected Essays of Plutarch* Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1913), tr. by T. G. Tucker. 1. pp. 501-2: ". . . when there is suddenly silence in an meeting, they say that Hermes has joined in . . ." A sudden pause in the conversation prompted the Greeks to say "Hermes is passing." This expression has survived to the present ("An Angel passes").

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Usually only this hermetic side of modernity is visible. Hestia invariably accompanies hermetic progression only as a shadow. At any rate, the Western world is the offspring not only of the hermetic Enlightenment but also of Romanticism, which vindicated archaic hearths. Modernity has generated not only science, technology and cosmopolitanism but also the most elaborate regressive theories in the history of thought. The 20th century has been one of great scientific developments, but also of Freud, Heidegger, ecological anguish and hermeneutics — ideas advocating a return to archaic roots. From the 18th century on there has been both a race towards the future and a visionary return to origins. A rejection of the hermetism of mercantile civilization and a return to the womb of a natural hearth, Rousseauism is more alive than ever in, e.g., ecological movements, Greenpeace, the pagan care of the body and animal life, and the admiration for "wild thinking." Consider one of this century's most successful concepts, *authenticity*. In a world increasingly dominated by scientific and technological rationality, ethics and art have proclaimed the ideal of authenticity as an absolute necessity, i.e., a way of thinking and behaving *according to one's own intimate truth*.[7] While the social world of exchange, money, bad faith, bureaucracy, hypocrisy and alienation splits the self, authenticity reestablishes contact with the self's primary center. What the advancing Hermes separates, Hestia reunites. Hermes is exchange and communication, which objectify those who participate in the exchange, splitting them from the exchanged object. Hestia is the reappropriation of what was fragmented and dispersed in exchange or communication.

All these examples show that modernity has recycled the opposition-complementarity the Greeks made divine but successive civilization suppressed. The pair Hestia-Hermes began to fade with Platonism and even more with Christianity. Before Plato, philosophies leaned towards either Hermes or Hestia. Parmenides' thought is the metaphysical apotheosis of the Hearth: "Being is, not-Being is not."[8] Being itself is a finite and circular sphere, a balanced and closed whole: ungenerated,

7. This authenticity has been interpreted by Nietzsche as the acknowledgment of the amoral will to power; by Freud, as an acceptance of libido and hitherto repressed inner impulses; by Heidegger, as the authenticity of the projecting being who accepts itself as being-unto-death; and by existentialism in general as the anguished unveiling of one's own unconditioned liberty. Even in Marxism, authenticity is the return to an original use-value in a world dominated by the hermetic alienation of exchange-value. Yet, all these theories claim that the subject must return to its own original "hearth."

8. Mario Untersteiner, *Parmenide. Testimonianze e Frammenti*, (Turin: Bocca, 1925); see, in particular, Proemios of *Peri Fuseos*, and Fragment 8.

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inperishable, everlasting, immobile, atemporal and perfect. This eternal immobility resembles the Greek's Mycenaean circular hearth. On the other hand, the prototype of a philosophical Hermes is Heraclitus for whom "everything flows" and "in the same river we both enter and do not enter, we are and we are not."[9] Heraclitus' own language — which is even more hermetic than that of contemporary deconstructionists — displays the inaccessible ubiquity of a universe where every stable identity disintegrates in becoming. The ambiguity of the Heraclitean phrases introduces into language a constant shifting of meanings. ". . . For them an appropriate saying is: I am here and I am elsewhere."[10]

If pre-Socratic thought still bears traces of the Hearth-Angel opposition — which was the way the Greeks conceptualized spacial relations — philosophy readily changed mythological paradigms. Thanks to Plato, philosophical discussion stopped focusing on the dialectic between centripetal immobility and centrifugal mutation, and emphasized the myth of the cave.[11] Subsequently, Western thought struggled with a rather different dialectic between the shadows of representation and the clear light of truth: the "obscurantist" world of appearances and the enlightened world of real things. The image of chained prisoners amidst the flickering fires in the cave appears as a derisive caricature of Hestia. This paradigm change introduced a long, metaphorical degradation into the anguished hearth which imprisons the spirit.

While the question of an alternative between movement and stasis — between Parmenidean absolutism and Heraclitean relativism — never disappeared, it became increasingly linked to what became the philosophical contraposition *par excellence*: Being and Appearance. Being gradually lost its resemblance to the Greek hearth and to the fixed earth at the center of the Ptolemaic universe, while appearance lost its kinship with the world of change and becoming. The Platonic myth of the cave concerns the difference between shadows and things seen in full light, rather than the difference between a stable Being and an unstable Becoming. From Plato to Nietzsche, the philosopher escapes the twilight of the inner recesses of his abode, in favor of a kind of conceptual heliotherapy. It remained this way up to Heidegger. Even in his philosophy, however, his striking image of Being as *Lichtung* (a

9. Heraclitus, Fragment 16, in Charles H. Kahn, *The Art and Thought of Heraclitus: an Edition of the Fragments*, (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

10. Heraclitus, Fragment 4, in *Ibid*.

11. *Plato's Republic* (Cambridge: The University Press, 1966), ed. and trans. by I. A. Richards, Book VII, pp. 123-25.

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clearing which opens in the middle of the dark forest of Being) perpetuates the Platonic myth of the cave. Heidegger's *Lichtung* remains concerned with illumination: letting light into a shadowy dark forest.

Thus the Hestia-Hermes pair never achieved the dignity of a philosophical paradigm. Moreover, for most of the Western cultural tradition, the main task of philosophy has been to provide or discover foundations for life and knowledge. Like the Greek hearth, "foundations" is metaphor. Yet it connects philosophical efforts to an Odyssey towards Hestia. Metaphysical philosophy takes on the responsibility of underpinning what humans continuously shake up on the earth's surface. It must support what would otherwise float through the air like empty words or mere fantasies. It must root (where?) what reason and history construct like towers, shooting away from the surface. And the soil is called Being.

But this metaphysical need for foundations resulted in the occlusion of the hearth and earthy rooting. From Plato on, philosophers have opted for a daring oxymoron: they have preferred heavenly derivation to sinking roots into the earth. They have tied themselves to a Supreme Being rather than grounding themselves in that immanence which originally pushed them towards a restless search for stability. For Plato, the foundation consists of Ideas. But this foundation is in the Heavens, not in the alcove. Unlike the common man who remains close to the soil, the philosopher seeks his "fatherland" in the heavens and not in his *oikos*, his home. The philosophical and later Christian hearth is transferred from Olympus upward. Hermetism, which obtains only in the sub-lunar world, describes terrestrial mutations and human fickelness. Precisely because metaphysics sought to return every sub-lunar dimension to the heavenly hearth of the foundation, it triggered the metaphysical hermetization of the world: shielded in an unchanging "hestia-like" centrality, philosophers saw their surrounding world increasingly and exclusively as the Heraclitean whirlwind of mutations. Descartes spelled it out clearly: the extended world is a vortex.

Ancient thought sought to interpret the hearth/angel tension by means of what might be called the great Greek erotic metaphor. It began with Parmenides' claming that Eros created the universe by mixing light and night. This metaphor is explicit in Plato, at least in the *Symposium* and in the *Phaedrus*: philosophy is a kind of erotic desire in that it pushes human beings hermetically towards the world of ideas, which is the true home, even if in the open air. The Socratic dialogue is the hermetic-erotic interaction that pulls man out of the cave, out of a narrow-minded and illusory hearth. The mundane world, the world of changing things, is upset by this attraction for its hyperbolic home: ideas.

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Even if less crudely explicit, this same erotic metaphor also pervades Aristotle's grandiose system. The mundane world is made up of beings that go back home: solids aim towards the hearth-earth, liquids towards the home-sea, flames and vapors towards the home-heavens. But the home of all homes, the final Hestia of all becoming, is the divinty: the Unmoved Mover. Sub-lunar mobility is the work of a kind of erotic attraction: it is the Prime Mover's attraction towards the final cause (as the Unmoved Mover). If the Aristotelian *final cause* is Hestia as the sought goal and immobile divinity, the *efficient cause*, which became increasingly "scientific" in the Newtonian mechanical universe, is Hermes as loving and promiscuous tension. At any rate, in ancient Greece Hermes was an ithyphallic divinity guarding Athen's crossroads. His erect penis signified a sexual desire ever ready to engage the other. It represents sexual excitation as the efficient cause of the reproduction of life. Therefore, both in Plato and in Aristotle, the hermetic world of becoming is described by means of its nostalgic love for the hearth: Hermes loves Hestia.

Christian civilization, on the other hand, did not describe the hermetic movement of the world as an erotic tension towards God because here the lover is God himself. Agape displaces Eros.[12] The creationist paradigm displaces the erotic metaphor: it is out of love that God created the world. Thus even in Christianity Hestia loves Hermes. But God's overflowing love, which generates the world, is not love for something existing before creation but love for his creatures. So with Christianity there is further imbalance in Hermes' favor. If God is the original hearth of the world, it drifts and resolves itself in the hermetic world of its creatures which are born, change, and die. In becoming man in Christ, God hermetizes himself.

But if Christianity brought about a hermetic turn with respect to classical Greek thought, Greek and Christian philosophers had already challenged the pagan world with their hyperbolic oxymoron. What has to be generated is not rootedness on earth but in heaven. The Vikings' epic poem, *Edda*, speaks of the "home of the birds" as a metaphor for the sky.[13] In Hellenic-Christian culture the human city takes root not on earth but in the "home of the birds."

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12. On the relation of Eros and Agape, see Anders Nygren, *Eros e Agape* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1980).

13. On this and other "home metaphors," see Sergio Benvenuto, " 'La Vera Casa.' Senso della Metafora e Critica della *Deutung* Freudiana," in *aut aut*, (January-April 1982), No. 187-88, pp. 103-122.

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The Renaissance brought about a new turn with the "discovery" of infinity. The ancient and medieval worlds mistrusted infinity as something imperfect — a potential but not yet actual being, something formless and immature. Ancient perfection was *teleias*, finite, spheric and self-contained. Beginning with Giordano Bruno and subsequently with the Newtonian infinite universe,[14] man is confidently set in infinity, a new exciting figure of a further hermeticization of thought and life. The ancient's circular hearth of the finite, round cosmos gave way to the modern, infinitely recursive tension. In the same epoch, however, there was also a new need to ground and focus on the subjective condition of *certainty*, which became the new hearth-like foundation sought in the private intimacy of the self and on two sides — either through the Cartesian *cogito* or through subjective perception, as in the empiricist tradition.

The Cartesian Subjectification of Hestia

In 1619, a 23-year-old Descartes was stuck in Ulm, Germany, by the onset of winter, while returning from Frankfurt to rejoin his regiment. There he was "in a neighborhood where, for lack of any conversation which might distract me, and fortunately also for lack of any worries or passions that might disturb me, I remained alone all day closed in a stove room (*poêle*), and there I had all the time to remain immersed in my thoughts."[15] This *poêle* was probably an enlarged fireplace the size of a small room, as can still be found in old parts of Brittany. Coming back to normality after the vicissitudes of war, Descartes laid out the foundations of his "method." In full winter in a German stove room, it was only a matter of organizing his mathematical knowledge in order to find a simpler way to write geometric and algebraic propositions. He was not yet dealing with "*cogito ergo sum*" or the philosophical articulation of his method. His emphasis on this forced quiescence as a turning point in his intellectual development and as the beginning of his philosophical vocation is significant.

He often reports interruptions of mundane time as preconditions for questioning all "certainties" that today would be regarded as "ethnic."[16]

14. Alexander Koyré, *From the Closed World to the Infinite Universe* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1968).

15. René Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, in *Selected Philosophical Writings* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1988), tr. by J. Cottingham, R. Stoothoff and D. Murdoch, p. 25.

16. Thus at the beginning of the *Meditations* he writes: "Today, as I have freed my mind from all cares and have secured leisure in peaceful solitude, I shall at last apply myself earnestly to the general overthrow of all my former opinions."See René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy*, in *Selected Philosophical Writings*, *op. cit.*, p. 76.

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This reflective returning to oneself is necessary in order to allow meditation time and place. It is a matter of re-entering a sort of spiritual rather than a physical *poêle*. It is an ecstatic suspension of the temporal and affective flow. On the other hand, this "opening scene" of modern rationalism exhibits a recurring peculiarity: it does not take place at home but abroad. The *poêle* was in Ulm, in a foreign country where Descartes knew no one. Even later, however, in order to articulate his thinking he went off to Holland, another foreign land. He describes himself as constantly travelling, almost like a vagabond, at least until 1628, when he settled in Holland. In that country, he wrote, "I have been able to be no less solitary and retired than in deserts the most remote."[17] Holland became his new and definitive "stove room" where he was able to withdraw far from all the countries in which he had acquaintances. For him Holland was not a country like all others: he depicted it almost as a kind of void in space and time. Holland was a philosophers' port-of-call because, like philosophical reflection, the Dutch are "serious and free." At the time Holland guaranteed peace in a world embroiled in countless political disputes and torn apart by religious wars — a hostel to a "great- people, ever active and more concerned with their own affairs than curious about those of others."[18] In this metaphorical desert, where no one cared about him, he found the *cogito*'s "homeland."

The interlude in the stove room and the withdrawal into the Dutch "desert" interrupted inverse, radically hermetic processes. Retracing his intellectual formation in *Discourse on Method*, Descartes described his cultural *excursions*. With hidden but intentional irony, he listed all he had learned at the Jesuit college of La Flèche: languages, fables, historical deeds, great books, eloquence, poetry, mathematics, moral essays, theology, philosophy, medicine, law — even the *sciences curieuses*, i.e., the occult. To this list he also added critiques pointing out their limitations. What ultimately led to his disenchantment was their *multiplicity*. Each discipline was next to the other, without any hierarchy to unite them, while within each of them a variety of often contradictory opinions proliferated. Even in philosophy, which "has been cultivated for many centuries . . . there is not a single thing of which it treats which is not still in dispute, and nothing, therefore, which is free from doubt."[19] According to him, doubt, uncertainty, diffidence and skepticism towards

17. Descartes, *Discourse on Method*, *op. cit.*, p. 117.
18. *Ibid.*
19. *Ibid.*, p. 98.

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all these disciplines and even of the most peremptory statements, such as the existence of God or the principles of current morality, were not a result of the way they were transmitted or from internal faults, but from their plurality, from the disorder brought about by their anarchic and altogether too tolerant coexistence.

This is why he "abandoned the study of letters" and spent the remainder of his youth "in travel, visiting courts and armies, in intercourse with men of diverse dispositions and callings, amassing varied experiences, testing myself in the various situations in which fortune landed me."[20] From the plurality of books and sciences, he went on to another excursion within the hermetic realm of diversity. The only difference was that here the trip took place in the "great book that is the world." After La Flèche, he kept travelling, but this time in geographical spaces: among the plurality of peoples, customs and beliefs. According to him, this excursion was motivated by his yearning for certainties.

But even this turned out to be a disappointment. Both in the stove room in Ulm and in Holland, there was a reversal of the hermetic progression into the diversity of books, sciences, powers, and beliefs: the subject came back to itself, to the hearth of his *cogito*, the basis of his method. Of course, the method was meant to progress, to make man the "lord and master of nature."[21] But this progression implied a regression to an intimate core. Only by coming back to the hearth of his self could the subject find the lowest common denominator with all men, beyond their various partial "certainties" (actually only opinions, precisely because of their multiplicity). In the hearth-stoveroom and in the Dutch limbo, the subject could find universal man. In the regressive intensity of the *cogito*, certainty, i.e., the universality of knowledge, emerged not beyond but prior to the multiplicity of beliefs. On the other hand, this intimate hearth is described as far from home: it is not a return to one's origins but, rather, a niche the philosopher found during his hermetic separation from the primary hearth. Moreover, cartesian hyperbolic doubt was itself a mental voyage to the extreme limits of reason, where the subject risked even losing himself. But only by taking his distance, only by going to the very bottom of the hermetic doubt, could the subject find his hearth of certitude. Therefore, hermetism was the pre-condition for withdrawing into the hearth but at the same time its product and its result, because only by going back to the *ergo cogitans* was the subject able to dominate nature.

20. *Ibid.*, p. 99.
21. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

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The *cogito ergo sum* was discovered precisely in those places removed from the multiplicity of spaces: my thinking as such testifies to my existence as such, at least as a thinking thing. Starting from the certainty of the here-and-now, the method essentially extended it hermetically to what appeared far from the burning certitude where everything was focused. The method protected against the risk, "where precipitation and prevention were the most to fear."[22] From Descartes on, a long tradition attributed error, both in interpretation and in reasoning, to two types of misjudgments: to *prejudices* and to a kind of *postjudgment*. Against the eruption of pre- and post-, the Cartesian method reestablished the authority of present judgment, of an immediate evidence which refused to be corrupted by past or future, memory or desire.

According to Descartes, even in the most automatic calculation, error resulted when the hermeticizing future prevailed on the hestia-like and ecstatic present. This is what more recent, non-Cartesian philosophies describe as the deflecting function of the will to power, desire, vitality, need, and pragmatic utility. But errors are also the result of prevention and prejudice, of the past prevailing on the present. This is what more modern philosophies describe as the unavoidable function of prejudice, anticipation and customs handed down by tradition.

Compared to the hermetic tensions of memory and desire, the *cogito* guaranteed the eternalization of present and presence. This hearth of certainty generated method as an orientation in the mundane flow of extended thing. Method related becoming not to earth as in ancient Greece but to the certain presence of the ego.[23] The ideal of clarity and distinctiveness provided Descartes with "sweetness and innocence." These are feelings tied to what Husserl was to call the *epoché*: "to bracket" — one of the most paradigmatically cartesian acts. In bracketing mundane opinions, the *epoché* brought about an exquisitely philosophical satisfaction. It was the pleasure of finding strength not in the multiplication of sciences or in the proliferation of powers but, on the contrary, in bracketing them. It was the rejection of more knowledge, knowing what was not known, putting aside what was known, abandoning the riches of science in favor of *intensity*, i.e., what Descartes found in the stove room and during his retirement in Holland.

The anecdote of Thales who fell into the ravine while gazing at the

22. *Ibid.*, p. 109.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 94. This is why Descartes writes that, "I experienced such extreme satisfaction from the moment I began to make use of this method, a satisfaction so sweet and so innocent that I could not have believed it possible in this life."

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sky is well known. Descartes modified it: before gazing at the starry sky, the philosopher seeks his ravine to lay in it. He no longer falls in it. This choosing of the ravine constitutes the confident strength of his method. Only by initially renouncing that hermetic passion can the human glance reach out to the extreme limits, to the very depths of the heavens. The innocence lies in the fact that Descartes' philosophy did not accept any mundane certainty. Initially, it did not legitimate any belief. At the beginning of his extensional drive the philosopher is not a partisan. At the root of Cartesian doubt there is not human uncertainty but the folly of various certainties. The regressive Cartesian journey went from bogus to true certainties: it was a move from ethnocentric abodes encountered in travels through books and countries to the single and universal abode appealing to common sense and reason, i.e., to something everyone has. The mastery of nature cannot come about through expansion in spacial and temporal extensions but through a paradoxical ascetic reduction to the indigence of the *cogito*.

Nietzsche's Hidden Hestia

As with Descartes, Nietzsche also described when and where his most important thoughts matured. In *Ecce Homo*, he narrates how Zarathustra's central idea was born: "the idea of the eternal recurrence, this highest formula of affirmation that is at all attainable, belongs in August 1881; it was penned on a sheet with the notation underneath, '6,000 feet beyond man and time.' That day I was walking through the woods along the lake of Silvaplana; at a powerful pyramidal rock not far from Surlej I stopped. It was then that this idea came to me. If I reckon back a few months from this day, I find as an omen a sudden and profoundly decisive change in my taste, especially in music." [24]

The setting of this primal scene was not by chance natural and nonhuman: forests, mountains, a lake, a rock. Those defending anthropological, "existential" interpretations of Nietzschean thought, especially of "eternal recurrence," ought to consider this hardly human scenario: "6,000 feet beyond man and time." The setting is Parmenidean, at least to the extent that Parmenides' poem, one of the earliest products of Western philosophy, actually begins with an ascension towards the heavens, "far from the path of men." As in Parmenides, in this alpine landscape Nietzsche felt like an Olympic god, away from the everyday

24. Friedrich Nietzsche, " 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra.' A Book for All and No One" in *Ecce Homo* (New York: Mcmillan, 1911), tr. by Anthony M. Ludovici, pp. 96-7.

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dealings of mundanity and historical time. This is far from the two gods who love human company: Hestia and Hermes. Yet Nietzsche wandered in an hermetic manner. In this atemporal and misanthropic situation he encountered a pyramid of rock — something persisting through time: an opaque and impenetrable mass. This mass stopped his wandering and thrust him before a thought which was itself rocky, persistent and hard: eternal recurrence. Here Nietzsche did not find a warm and reassuring human hearth: what is stable, perennial and fixed. It was not the flame lit by humans, but the frozen and extraneous hardness of a rock. The dark rock, not the hearth, stopped the becoming, anchoring him to earth.

This may sound surprising since it is assumed that Nietzsche subscribed to the hermetic polarity of modern philosophical thought. He praised the "Heraclitean child" who constantly created and destroyed all, himself included. The god Nietzsche chose was not Hermes but Dionysus. "Dionysian philosophy: a conception which sees in the creation and the transformation of men and things the highest lust of existence."[25] This perennial creation and destruction implied a vertiginous dialectic: "Pain is also pleasure, a curse is also a blessing, night is also a sun — go away or you will learn that a wise man is also a fool."[26] Everything need not move or transform itself in order to be other: hermetic alteration is within everything, rendering it viscerally "other" with respect to itself. In Nietzsche's Dionysian Heracliteism, grounding on earth, i.e., the philosophical search for *foundations*, fades — even as Nietzsche volunteered to be a helpful railing alongside this implacable Heraclitean stream: "I am a railing by the torrent: let those who can, grasp me! Your crutch, however, I am not."[27]

If Dionysus is the god of becoming, the *sea* is its figure *par excellence*: "The Superman is the sea."[28] The sea disappears in the horizon, it joins an image of boundless and sovereign freedom with one of insecurity and uncertainty. The sea is immobile, but at the same time it contains a myriad of movements and forms: "a sea full of colorful fish and crabs."[29] This image describes the most puzzling and contradictory side of Nietzsche's thought: the sea is the place of becoming but like eternal recurrence, it is also unchanging and stable. In Nietzsche, changing

25. *Posthumous Fragments 1884-1885*, fr. 34.176.
26. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* (New York: Tudor Publishing Co., 1936), par. 10.
27. *Ibid.*, Part I, Ch. 6, "The Pale Criminal," p. 34.
28. *Ibid.*, "Prologue," par. 3, p. 5.
29. *Ibid.*, Part IV, Ch. 61, "The Honey Sacrifice," p. 253.

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precariousness and lofty stability appear joined, but not as in the Greeks, through two deities interacting with humans. On the contrary, Nietzsche joined them through the cosmic and extra-urban figures of the sea, the sun, the rock, the sunset, the beasts and the river.

In this aimless wandering, even part of Zarathustra is unhappy. The Superman's shadow has become the shadow of itself because it is "always on the road, but aimless and homeless."[30] The shadow is very much like Zarathustra: it "has learnt to disbelieve the words, values and famous names," it too knows that "nothing is true, everything is permitted." Unlike Zarathustra, however, it cries out "Where is — my home? I ask and search and have searched for it, but I have not found it." The shadow seeks a port other than an antinomic "port in the sea." Nietzsche's shadow recalls the shadows of Plato's cave: if in Plato imprisonment and immobility entail entanglement with the shadows, in Nietzsche shadows are such because they yearn for imprisonment and immobility. To his shadow's lament, Zarathustra responds by recalling the bliss of the prisoners who, in jail, ". . . sleep calmly, enjoying their new security." Then, in a typically Platonic style, Zarathustra says: "You poor roaming enthusiast. . . . Would you like to have a rest and home this evening? Then go up to my cave." The Western tradition reasserts itself. The house of shadows is the cave because the metaphysical search for home turns people into shadows. From an hermetic viewpoint, the world of illusions is the world of those who still seek the security and stability of foundations.

In Nietzsche, however, there is a degradation of the privileged and structuring role of *ousia*: the presence and the present as grounds for becoming, what anchors becoming to Being, fades. From Augustine on, philosophers assumed that the present was the locus of Being, while past and future were non-Being. In place of this ecstasy of the present, Nietzsche substituted the *moment*, which is not the present but its shadow. The moment is a passage — an extension that can be shrunk at will — the ambiguous and inconsistent location where Being and non-Being meet, where past and future intertwine. The moment does not thrive in the non-Being of memory (the past) and expectation (the future). Rather, it is where past and future coalesce. It is the other side of eternity, i.e., a timeless Being, because it is non-Being in time. This is why for Nietzsche the moment seems to be solar.[31] For him, the

30. *Ibid.*, Part IV, Ch. 69, "The Shadow," p. 292.

31. *Joyful Wisdom* (New York: Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1973), tr. by Thomas Common, pp. 263-65.

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sun is what sets: what, in emanating, disperses itself in the world: it is the light of becoming and not the centrality of the foundation. The individual seeks a singular position with respect to all things. In so doing, however, "he discovers that he himself is something changing and that he has alternate and fluctuating tastes; through his refinement he arrives at the discovery of that mystery — that he is not an individual, that in the most elusive and slippery moment he is something different from what he will be in the successive moment, that his conditions of existence are those of an enormous number of individuals: *the infinitely small moment* is the higher reality and truth, a sudden image emerging from the eternal flow."[32] Here it is a matter of Dionysian innocence, which refutes compassion and responsibility and accepts the pure unfolding of the will to power.

It is precisely the phenomenology of the moment which reveals how Nietzsche's thought is not just a hymn to the will to power as the matrix of becoming. It is also the thought of the eternal recurrence of the equal. The celebration of sealike change has as its underside a doctrine of eternity. Then how can Heidegger be faulted for seeing Nietzsche as attempting to reconcile two seemingly incompatible philosophies: that of eternal becoming and that of the return — i. e., Parmenides and Heraclitus?[33] "To give to becoming the feature of Being," Nietzsche writes, "this is the supreme *Will to Power*."[34] According to Heidegger: "Nietzsche, in his most essential thought about the Eternal Recurrence, binds together the two fundamental determinations of being specific to the beginnings of Western philosophy: being as becoming and being as stability."[35] "The eternal return is the stablest stabilization of what is without stability."[36] In other words, Nietzsche undertakes the most daring attempt to reconcile the Hearth and the Angel.

Nietzsche is not satisfied to claim, with Gorgias, that "Nothing is." He has to show that "Nothingness is true Being." This reconciliation is not as reckless as it first appears: to claim that everything is becoming implies that at least something *is*, i.e., becoming. To claim that nothing is eternal and that everything changes leads to the conclusion that "change is eternal." But it is not sufficient to say that, like the sea, eternal

32. *Posthumous Fragments 81-82*, p. 363, fr. 11. p. 248.
33. Martin Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, (Pfulligen: Neske, 1961), tr. by David Farrell Krell, Vol. I, p. 465, 468, and vol. II, p. 288 (English tr., San Francisco: Harper & Row), 1979-87.
34. *Posthumous Fragments*, *op. cit.*, p. 297.
35. Heidegger, *Nietzsche*, *op.cit.*, Vol. I, p. 468.
36. *Ibid.*, p. 286.

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becoming is steadily becoming. He needs to argue that anything that is becoming returns, i.e., that it has the features of the old Being.

If Nietzsche wanted to celebrate the essential character of becoming, why did he come up against the rock of eternal recurrence? Why does he not just talk about the transitory, the ephemeral, the radically contingent? It is because in Nietzsche everything that occurs has an eternal inscription whereby *contingency resolves itself into necessity*. For Nietzsche it is not enough to claim, along with the Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus*, that "everything in the world is accident" (because for Wittgenstein only logic, being mere tautology, is necessary).[37] He must provokingly attribute to accidental events the spoils of necessity. Nietzsche feels the need to make even the most marginal happenings divine. Once God has been killed, Nietzsche does not intend to live in the secularized way of "the last man": as Superman, he wants to make the human and the ephemeral divine. He is not satisfied with claiming that "everything changes." He must also conclude that "change is all." Unlike the "lay" and "secularized" soul, once God has been eliminated he does not also want to eliminate the demons: he makes demons into gods. In this way, the doctrine of eternal return means that "contingency is necessary," not because it refers to a deeper necessity, but because contingency itself assumes what in previous philosophies were the features of necessary things.

There has been much discussion concerning to what extent the eternal return can be interpreted as a cyclic vision of time. Today Nietzsche scholars generally reject this interpretation. As Deleuze wrote: "Eternal recurrence does not lead to a return of 'the same'; on the contrary, returning itself constitutes the only Sameness of what becomes."[38] "Returning is the Being of that which becomes."[39]

As is well-known, the cyclical vision of time is common among archaic and primitive cultures, and can be found even among the Greeks. Archaic societies do not consider time irreversible but cyclical, according to the pattern of seasons, the alternation of day and night, menstruation, moon phases, etc. Nietzsche, however, regards this circular view of

37. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-philosophicus* (Routledge & Kegan Paul: London 1961): "The exploration of logic means the exploration of anything that is subject to law. And outside logic, everything is accidental" (6.3) ; "If there is any value that does have value, it must lie outside the whole sphere of what happens and is the case. For all that happens and is the case is accidental. What makes it non-accidental cannot lie within the world, since if it did it would itself be accidental," pp. 137 and 145.

38. Gilles Deleuze, *Différénce et Répétition* (Paris: PUF, 1968).

39. Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1983).

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time as nihilistic. To the claim that "Everything goes, everything comes back; eternally rolls the wheel of being," Zarathustra replies "O you buffoons and barrel organs, be silent!"[40] That means that there are different returns. In other words, there is the return of "buffoons and barrel organs," i.e., the serpent which bites its own tail; and there is an hermetic, "trivial" return, where "the sameness" of a thing appears as its return.

A Secret Coincidence

Does this mean the cosmic myth of the eternal recurrence curbs the basic hermetism of Nietzsche's thought or is it its extreme consequence? Actually, Nietzsche is faced with the paradox of all hermetisms which, carried to the end, flows into (or reveals itself as) the hearth. Consider the ordeal of the modern world, which has accelerated and intensified exchanges like no other civilization before it, at the risk of annihilating itself. Exchanges imply *differences*: each one gives to others what they do not have. It is fed by inequalities, gaps, differences of potentials, unevenesses, etc. But precisely this apotheosis of universal exchanges threatens to reduce the whole planet, as never before, to MacLuhan's homogeneous global village, i.e., to turn it into an undifferentiated entity: a simple hearth. When a household emerges from its isolation and begins to exchange commodities, language, ideas, sexual partners, money, etc., it betrays its centripety, although at the end it can reach the level of a planetary Hestia which can level the world to a feverish but indifferentiated closure. The world's hermetic turmoil constantly tends to flow in an hestia-like entropy of a universe closed in its own circularity. Hestia is the destiny of Hermes, its fatal direction.

Yet to meet Hestia at the end of the hermetic journey is not the same as meeting her at the *beginning* or anytime earlier. The Hestia which Hermes reaches is not the one from which he departed. Already in Aristotle, the efficient cause and the final cause do not coincide, and this gap generates the entire erotic adventure of so restless a cosmos. It is a matter of timing, connections and chances. It is what Nietzsche intuited and made his writing so recalcitrant to any clear systematization. What matters in Nietzsche is not *what* he says but *when* he says it. At that point of the journey, he lingers close to the hearth or goes beyond it. So eternal recurrence is the hearth where the hermetic will to power thrives. But the contrary is also true: that Heraclitean becoming has an

40. *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *op. cit.*, Part III, Ch. 57, "The Convalescent," p. 234.

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origin, a focus whence it emanates, a sun (hyperbole for the hearth) which Nietzsche emphasizes. The circle between Hearth and Angel is never closed: it eternally repeats itself.

From Hestia's viewpoint, Vernant pursues even further the relation between the two gods. Precisely because it welds the home's altar to the ground, the "Mycenaean hearth" represented by Hestia also relates the domestic *oikos* with the whole world[41] — to the point that an old tradition identifies Hestia with Kore, Demeter's daughter who spends half her time with Hades in Hell and the other half among men. Thus Kore and Hestia, as mediations between the mundane world of the living and the underground world of the dead, play the same role as Hermes, guardian of the "passage" between life and death. On the other hand, the home's round hearth is connected to the lantern, open upwards, which lets the smoke out: symbolically, it is the point of the home through which human things rise to heaven. Therefore, Hestia establishes contact between earth and skies, just like the mercurial Herald. "For members of the *oikos*" writes Vernant, "the hearth, the center of the house, also marks the path of exchange with both the gods beneath and those above, the axis through which all parts of the universe are joined together, from one end to the other."[42]

Evidence for this can be found in Plato's *Cratylus* where, dealing with the etymology of Hestia, he provides two possible interpretations.[43] One is *ousia*, the fixed essence: the other is *osia*, constant movement as the principle of all things — the impulse towards movement. "Hestia as the principle of permanence; Hestia as the principle of impetus and of movement. This contradictory interpretation of the name of the hearth-goddess contains the very foundations of the relation which simultaneously opposes and unites in a couple bound by an unbreakable 'friendship': goddess who immobilizes the space around a fixed center and the god who renders it endlessly and everlastingly mobile."[44]

Thus only at first sight do Hestia and Hermes appear to be distinct or in opposition. Following the thread of their "friendly" relation reveals an essential identity between the Hearth and the Angel. They both undergo a reversal. Hestia appears as the hidden essence of hermetism, just as Hermes brings to light the truth of Hestia. In other words, *ultimately* Hestia leads to the constant hermetic becoming; but

41. Vernant, *op.cit.*, p. 160.
42. Vernant, *op.cit.*, p. 160.
43. *Cratylus*, 401 c-e. *op. cit*, pp. 65-67.
44. Vernant, *op.cit.*, p. 161.

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at bottom Hermes there has as his "essence" the permanent immobility of the hearth. Many philosophers, from Plato to Nietzsche, have found themselves confronting this shifting of opposites. Beyond this, it can even be claimed that maybe every great philosophy, i.e., any philosophy which does not reduce to militating under some metaphysical flag, assumes this audacious task: to show that, at a certain point, the Hearth and the Angel are the same, and that the historical drama of the world is based, basically, on an opposition presupposing a secret coincidence. It is all a matter of how and when this unexpected identity is revealed.

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Introduction to Schmitt's "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations"

John E. McCormick

The collapse of the USSR has rendered obsolete post-WWII geopolitical categories. In attempting to discern an "emerging reality," Samuel Huntington has prefigured a "new phase" in the "evolution of conflict."[1] He warns that a "clash of civilizations" looms on the horizon — a clash in which the West will be confronted by a "Confucian-Islamic" alliance. Central to this conflict will be theological differences, technological factors and the uncertain status of the former USSR and its satellites. Already in 1929 Carl Schmitt outlined a similar analysis of the clash of cultures in "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations" — a lecture delivered at the Sixth Annual Conference of the International Association for Cultural Cooperation,[2] held in Barcelona, Spain,

1. See Samuel Huntington, "The Clash of Civilizations?" in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 3 (Summer 1993), pp. 22-49. Cf. the responses to Huntington's "The Clash of Civilizations?" by Fouad Ajami, Kishore Mahbubani, Robert L. Bartley, Liu Binyan, Jeane J. Kirkpatrick, et al. in *Foreign Affairs*, Vol. 72, No. 4 (September/October 1993), pp. 2-26.

2. This Conference, whose theme was "Culture as a Social Problem," was sponsored by the Spanish and Catalonian Cultural Union in Barcelona. See the report on the Conference, "Kultur als soziales Problem," probably by the editor, Karl Anton Prinz Rohan, in *Europäische Revue*, Vol. VI (January-June 1930), pp. 51-62. Schmitt's lecture, originally published under the title, "Die europäische Kultur in Zwischenstadien der Neutralisierung," appeared in *Europäische Revue*, Vol. V (October-December 1929), pp. 517-530. It subsequently appeared under the title "Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen" in the Third Edition of *Der Begriff des Politischen* (1932). A French translation by William Gueydan de Roussell was published in *L'Année Politique française et étrangère*, Vol. 11 (December 1936), pp. 274-289. The lecture is also included in Carl Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar — Genf — Versailles 1923-1939* (1940), Second Edition (Berlin: Duncker und Humblot, 1988), pp. 120-132.

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October 16-20, 1939. Schmitt's lecture might even be an indirect source of Huntington's thesis, since there may be a clear line from Schmitt, via Hans Morgenthau, to Huntington's political "realism."[3]

Schmitt's lecture is startlingly similar to Huntington's article in several respects. Like Huntington, Schmitt sees the dawning of a new "phase" of political conflict, quasi-theological in character, concerned with technology and having Russia as a particular focus. Since this lecture can also be considered an elaboration of Schmitt's "The Concept of the Political" — originally a lecture delivered in Berlin in 1927[4] — it is crucial to an understanding of Schmitt's work during the Weimar Republic.[5] Its "political" objective can be found in the opening statement: "We in Central Europe live under the eyes of the Russians." Whereas Huntington is ambivalent as to whether Russia will be "with or against us," Schmitt is adamant. The Soviet Union is the main enemy of Europe and must be recognized as such. The grounds for this "political" position is technology, which is the central issue of the 20th century: the Russians' "vitality is strong enough to seize our knowledge and technology as weapons." More urgently Schmitt adds: "The anti-religion of technicity has been put into practice on Russian soil and. . . there a state arose which is more intensely statist than was any state of the absolute princes. . . ."

The Europeans' exhaustion after the "Great War" of 1914 had fostered a disposition to the *status quo* similar to that following the French Revolution and Napoleonic Wars. The Russians had understood this and were seeking to take advantage of the historical moment. Schmitt intimates that the political goals of the Russian dominated Soviet Union could shatter the veneer of neutrality in a Europe hostage to the League of Nations. In order better to understand the emergent confrontation Schmitt foresees developing between the Soviet Union and Central Europe in his 1929 lecture, it is necessary to examine three factors interrelated in his opening remarks: history, technology and the political.

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3. On the relation between Schmitt and Morgenthau, see Alfons Söllner, "German Conservatism in America: Morgenthau's Political Realism," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 161-172.

4. See the English translation by George Schwab of Schmitt's fully elaborated treatise in the third German edition published in 1932, to which Schmitt appended his 1929 speech, *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1976).

5. Cf. George Schwab, *The Challenge of the Exception: An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936*, Second Edition (New York: Greenwood Press, 1989), pp. 73-76.

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History

According to Schmitt, the dynamics of modern Western history since the 16th century has been the search for a neutral sphere — one free of conflict, allowing the possibility of mutual agreement and peace. What precipitated this state of affairs was that the dominant theme or, as Schmitt calls it, the "central sphere" of the 16th century, i.e., theology, had resulted in religious civil wars threatening Europe's cultural unity. Thus this conflictual sphere was abandoned in the 17th century for the "neutral" sphere of metaphysics, which then itself became conflictual and was superseded in the 18th century by humanitarian ethics and morality. The 19th century was dominated by economics.

The European spirit could not remain in any one of these spheres forever because the repressed human inclination to conflict inevitably destroyed the presumed neutrality: "In the dialectic of such a development one creates a new sphere of struggle precisely through the shifting of the central sphere. In the new sphere, at first considered neutral, the antitheses of men and interests unfold with a new intensity . . . . Europeans always have wandered from a conflictual to a neutral sphere, and always the newly-won neutral sphere has become immediately another arena of struggle, once again necessitating the search for a new neutral sphere."

While Schmitt articulates this dynamics, he rejects any association with "vulgar" deterministic accounts of historical change that fill the pages of 19th century philosophies of history. He also refuses to reduce each epoch to the central sphere, since he specifically recognizes a plurality of elements in each, while simultaneously dodging the kind of criticism leveled at Hegel for his often crudely ethnocentric statements in his philosophy of history: "I speak not of human culture as a whole, not of the rhythm of world history, and am able to speak neither about the Chinese nor the East Indians or the Egyptians."

Schmitt does not conceal his admiration for the intellectual elite of the 17th century — "the heroic age of occidental rationalism." By the same token, he does not conceal his disgust for the 18th century intellectual elite, whose work he characterizes as "a vulgarization on a grand scale." For example, he calls Pufendorf an "epigone" of Suarez and considers Rousseau's social contract merely a "vulgarization" of Pufendorf. All are mere imitators of the true intellectual innovators of the 17th century, such as Hobbes and Spinoza. Although Schmitt's stated aim is to avoid reductionism in describing the relation between forms of consciousness and the central spheres, some of his more insightful examples come dangerously close to just that: "The Lisbon earthquake

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could occasion a whole flood of moralizing literature, whereas today a similar event would pass almost unnoticed; it is also true that an economic catastrophe, such as a sharp monetary devaluation or a crash, occasions widespread and acute interest both practical and theoretical."

Most interesting is Schmitt's analysis of the 19th century and the affinities of his analyses with those of Western Marxism. While the 19th century is characterized by "an apparently hybrid and impossible combination of aesthetic-romantic and economic-technical tendencies," echoing Marx and Lukács, Schmitt, the reputed anti-Marxist, shows how these tendencies are interrelated.[6] Romanticism is "only the intermediary stage of the aesthetic between the moralism of the 18th and the economism of the 19th century, only a transition which precipitated the aestheticization of all intellectual spheres. It did so very easily and successfully. The way from the metaphysical and moral spheres is through the aesthetic sphere, which is the surest and most comfortable way to the general economization of intellectual life and to a state of mind which finds the core categories of human existence in production and consumption."

Freed from the constraints of religion and dogma, 18th century subjective morality gave way in the 19th century to an aesthetic appreciation of objects. As Schmitt observed in *Political Romanticism* (1919), the romantic searches for objects and situations as mere "occasions" for the expression of subjective feelings.[7] Marx and Lukács considered this phenomenon an expression of the commodity form, which they saw as the fundamental unit of capitalist society. The commodity's use-value is determined by the qualitatively specific modes of labor that produce it, which invites an aesthetic concern with the concrete attributes of things — an arbitrarily subjective ascription of content to particular objects. Along with Marx and Lukács, Schmitt recognizes that this aestheticization is not antithetical to a simultaneous "economization," but is rather its "typical accompanying phenomenon."

For Marx and Lukács, the other moment of the commodity is exchange value, which reflects the general or abstract labor that characterizes industrial society as a whole. This aspect of modern society is responsible for the interchangeability of commodities, the reduction of

6. The affinities between Schmitt, Marx and Lukács are explored in G. L. Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert: Eine Studie über Max Weber und Carl Schmitt* (Weinheim: VCH/Acta humaniora, 1991).

7. See Carl Schmitt, *Political Romanticism*, tr. by Guy Oakes (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985).

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qualitatively different entities to quantitative equivalents, a rationality abstracted from material particularity and the apparently resulting "valuelessness" of modernity.[8] Schmitt recognizes this formal aspect of modern society when he remarks elsewhere that capitalism is utterly indifferent to the production of "a silk blouse or poison gas."[9] While he obviously disagreed with the Marxian claim that modernity is driven by the compulsion to surplus value, the affinity between Marx and Schmitt is useful in demonstrating how Schmitt's account of modernity is free of some of the shortcomings of two of his contemporaries — Max Weber and Martin Heidegger. While both often characterized modernity in terms of its abstract, "valueless," formal and quantitative aspects in their respective theories of "rationalization" or "framing," Schmitt sides with the tradition of Critical Theory in claiming modernity also produces its own peculiar "concrete" and "qualitative" forms.

Weber and Heidegger tend to view the concrete and qualitative as either remnants of the premodern past or something that must be willed into the modern present. Despite certain similarities between Schmitt, Weber and Heidegger,[10] the former is more sensitive to the particular dualisms of modern thought: objective and subjective, form and content, abstract and concrete. Of course, much of the controversy surrounding Schmitt's work concerns his relation to the "concrete" aspect of modernity.[11] Although in his 1929 lecture Schmit explicitly criticizes Marxism for being outdated, appropriate only to the 19th century economic "central sphere," he at least acknowledges that Marx already recognized "that the economic epochs of mankind are determined by specific technical means."[12]

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8. For analyses of this "dual character" of the commodity form, see Karl Marx, *Capital* , tr. by Ben Fowkes (London: Vintage Press, 1976), Vol. 1, Chap. 1. See also the section titled "The Antinomies of Bourgeois Thought," in Georg Lukács, *History and Class Consciousness*, tr. by Rodney Livingstone (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988). More recently, see Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor and Social Darwinism: A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), especially Chaps. 4 and 5.

9. Carl Schmitt, *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (1923), Second Edition (Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta Verlag, 1984), p. 23. An English translation by G. L. Ulmen, *Roman Catholicism and Political Form*, is forthcoming (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1994).

10. Cf. Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert*, *op. cit.*, cf. also Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung: Eine Untersuchung bei Ernst Jünger, Carl Schmitt, Martin Heidegger* (1958), Second Edition (Frankfurt a/M: Campus Verlag, 1990).

11. Despite some interpretive shortcomings, the first critique of Schmitt along these lines was Herbert Marcuse's "The Struggle Against Liberalism in the Totalitarian View of the State" (1934), reprinted in Marcuse, *Negations: Essays in Critical Theory*, tr. by Jeremy J. Shapiro (Boston: Beacon Press, 1968), pp. 3-42.

12. Regarding Schmitt's theory of history, it is interesting to compare the difference

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Technology

One of the most misunderstood aspects of Schmitt's thought is his attitude toward technology. In an often misleading work, *Reactionary Modernism*, Jeffrey Herf repeatedly refers to Schmitt as one who embraced, positively valued and aestheticized modern technology.[13] His thesis comparing the pro-technology stance of radical conservative intellectuals during the Weimar Republic with their reactionary counterparts in other European nations is forced on Schmitt in cookie-cutter fashion. Obviously Herf has not read Schmitt's 1929 lecture in relation to two other works explicitly criticizing technology — *Theodor Däubler's "Nordlicht"* (1916) and *Römischer Katholizismus und politische Form* (1923).[14] An intense passage toward the end of his 1929 lecture is often cited as evidence of Schmitt's "pro-technology" stance: "A result of human understanding and specialized knowledge, such as a discipline and in particular modern technology, also cannot simply be presented as dead and soulless any more than can the religion of technicity be confused with technology itself. The spirit of technicity, which has led to the mass belief in an anti-religious activism, is still spirit; perhaps an evil and demonic spirit, but not one which can be dismissed and attributed to technology. It is perhaps something gruesome, but not itself technical and mechanical. It is the belief in an activistic metaphysics — the belief in unlimited power and the domination of man over nature, even over human nature; the belief in the unlimited 'receding of

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between his 1929 lecture and an essay written during WWII: *Land und Meer: Eine weltgeschichtliche Betrachtung* (1943), Second Edition (Cologne: Hohenheim Verlag, 1981). For the only English discussion of this work, see Stephen Holmes, "Carl Schmitt: The Debility of Liberalism," in Holmes, *The Anatomy of Anti-Liberalism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1993).

13. See Jeffrey Herf, *Reactionary Modernism: Technology, Culture and Politics in Weimar and the Third Reich* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), pp. 3, 42, 44-46, 118-120. Such mistakes are unfortunately repeated by other Schmitt scholars. See, for example, Jerry Z. Muller, "Carl Schmitt, Hans Freyer and the Radical Conservative Critique of Liberal Democracy in the Weimar Republic," in *History of Political Thought*, Vol. XII, No. 4 (Winter 1991), pp. 695-715; and Richard Wolin, "Carl Schmitt: The Conservative Revolutionary. Habits and the Aesthetics of Horror," in *Political Theory*, Vol. XX, No. 3 (August 1992), pp. 424-447. The issue of technology is taken up in the context of Herf's more general misinterpretations of Schmitt in his exchange with Paul Piccone and G. L. Ulmen. See "Reading and Misreading Schmitt," in *Telos* 74 (Winter 1987-88), pp. 113-140. See also Joseph W. Bendersky's refutation of Schmitt as a "conservative revolutionary" in "Carl Schmitt and the Conservative Revolution," in *Telos* 72 (Summer 1987), pp. 91-96.

14. For a treatment of these two works in relation to Schmitt's 1929 lecture, see G. L. Ulmen, "The Sociology of the State: Carl Schmitt and Max Weber," in *State, Culture and Society*, Vol. 1 (1983), pp. 3-57.

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natural boundaries,' in the unlimited possibilities for change and prosperity. Such a belief can be called fantastic and satanic, but not simply dead, spiritless, or mechanized soullessness." Herf claims that Schmitt's distinction between "technicity" (*Technizität*) and "technology" (*Technik*) seeks to rehabilitate the latter. But this passage ought to be unpacked more carefully in light of the lecture as a whole.

At the outset Schmitt claims that "the anti-religion of technicity" has found its home "on Russian soil." This is his definition of technicity: a religion that is yet anti-religious; it is concerned solely with an activistic "metaphysics" in the material world; it is practiced through the "unlimited" and "unbounded" domination of nature, including human nature. It may be responsible for "the splendid array of contemporary technology," but unlike the latter it is not simply "technical" or "mechanical." Is Schmitt exalting technology at the expense of technicity as Herf claims? No, since he considers technology to be "dead and soulless." Rather, he wants to inspire a generation of intellectuals too long under the spell of a cultural and technological pessimism propagated by the likes of Weber, Spengler, Troeltsch and Rathenau. He warns his listeners that the technicity behind technology may not be benign, but it is also not "lifeless," "soulless," "dead," or "spiritless" as the romantic tradition had led them to believe.

As Heidegger would argue later, the "essence" of technology is "nothing technological."[15] His notion of "enframing (*Gestell*)" is thus similar to Schmitt's concept of technicity in that an entity considered almost *alive* is the driving force behind the emergence and continuation of the essentially *lifeless* machines of modern technology. In *Nordlicht* and *Römischer Katholizismus*, Schmitt likens the spirit of technology to "the Antichrist." Although by 1929 he had long abandoned formal Catholicism, he still employs theological terms in his negative appraisal of technicity as "evil," "demonic," "mechanistic," etc. In so doing, he wants to make his audience aware of the "terrifying" spirit that has moved in next door: "The remark about the Russians was intended to remind us of this."

Why this emphasis on an intellectual elite in relation to technology? Because Schmitt attributes the dynamics of modernity — from one "central sphere" of neutrality to another — to the conscious activity of European intellectuals. Over the centuries these "clerics," as Schmitt

15. Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology" (1954) in David Krell, ed., Heidegger, *Basic Writings* (New York: Harper & Row, 1977), p. 302.

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calls them, have guided Europe from theology to technology because "the absolute and neutral ground has been found in technology since apparently there is nothing more neutral." But Schmitt cautions: ". . . this is only a tentative characterization of the whole situation," since there are at least two problems with technology as a neutral ground.

The first lies with the "great masses" of the West, for whom technology could never be neutral. Its very success and efficiency, and the almost supernatural way it transforms nature, infused it with theological meaning which ultimately became a religion of technicity. Thus the theology abandoned in the 16th century returns in a different form with the "central sphere" of the 20th century. Intensifying the problem, according to Schmitt, is that unlike the clerics "the great masses of the industrialized countries" were never fully secularized: "They skipped all intermediary stages typical of the thinking of intellectual vanguards and turned the belief in miracles and an afterlife — a religion without intermediary stages — into a religion of technical miracles, human achievements and the domination of nature. A magical religiosity became an equally magical technicity." Schmitt implies that controversies and conflicts not unlike those of the 16th century are possible in the 20th century with the return of theology under the guise of technicity, be it religious or anti-religious.

The second problem with technology as a neutral sphere lies not with the masses but with the intellectuals or, more precisely, with the lack of clerics engaged in an age of technology. According to Schmitt, there can be no intellectual elite in a society dominated by the technical sphere. The clerics thought they had good reason to push society in a technical direction because of its reputed neutrality. The fact that technical problems "have something refreshingly factual about them," that the technical aspect of things appeals in the same way to everyone makes technology appear to be "a sphere of peace, understanding and reconciliation." But the clerics encouraged their own extinction because the universality of technology requires no intellectual vanguard to guide its use. The early centuries of modernity opened new possibilities for the "active elite" no longer bound by traditional sanctions. They were able to interpret the central spheres for the masses and thus control them. But since technology lacks any content, nothing truly important can be derived from it — "neither a concept of cultural progress, nor a type of cleric or intellectual leader, nor a specific political system." Given that technology is so devoid of content, everyone will see in it something different and employ it in different ways, which is why it will give rise to conflicts: "every strong politics will make use of it."

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Two ramifications of the distinction between technicity and technology are significant: one for the Soviet Union and one for European intellectuals. As Heidegger observes, the purely instrumental attitude that accompanies technology fosters anxiety regarding its mastery: "So long as we represent technology as an instrument, we remain transfixed in the will to master it."[16] Schmitt finds a similar anxiety in attitude among industrialized Western masses in general and the Russians in particular. Possessed by the spirit of technicity, they seek mastery of it for its own sake. Bewitched by an "activistic metaphysics," they hope to "control these frightful weapons" of technology and to "wield this monstrous power."

This anxiety manifests itself in the opposite way for the intellectual elite, resigned to the fact that technology cannot be mastered. Schmitt attributes the intellectual malaise of his generation to the doubt of would-be clerics concerning its use. Thus he starkly contrasts the Russians' attitude towards technicity with the European intellectuals' neutrality — intellectuals who have abdicated their rightful position of leadership. "A European century which bewailed the '*maladie du siècle*' and awaited the domination of Caliban or 'After us the Savage God' was succeeded by a German generation which complained about a soulless age of technology in which the soul is helpless and powerless." Schmitt's message is that the age of neutralization which fostered this pessimism "has reached its end." Apparently anointing himself a cleric of post-neutralization Europe, he wants to provide a "political" understanding of technicity.[17] However, it is important to recognize here that his attitude toward technology is neither positive nor negative but neutral. He never glorifies or aetheticizes the tools, machines or weapons associated with technology, as Herf and others claim. In fact, in most of his writings just the opposite is the case.[18] The "politics" of technicity is a different matter.

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16. *Ibid.*, p. 314.

17. On Schmitt's self-perception as an intellectual-political motivator for the reformulation of the Hobbesian theory of the state, see my forthcoming article, "Fear, Technology and the State: Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss and the Revival of Hobbes in Weimar and National Socialist Germany," in *Political Theory* (1994).

18. A more appropriate figure to compare with Schmitt on the issue of technology than any of Herf's "reactionary modernists" might be Leo Strauss. In the closing pages of *Thoughts on Machiavelli* ([1958] Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), Strauss concurs with the ancient philosophers' repugnance toward technology but maintains nevertheless that a philosopher must resign himself to it when threatened by a tyrant. Like Schmitt, the modern "tyranny" against which Strauss advocates the use of technology is the Soviet Union.

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The Political

Schmitt's opening identification of the Soviet Union as the enemy is now clear. The distinction between technicity and technology clarifies why he considers the Russians dangerous. He speaks of their "prowess in rationalism and its opposite." Significantly, he never mentions communism but, following Donoso Cortès, claims that the Russians have "realized the union of Socialism and Slavism." This meant that the Soviet Union embodied not only economic rationality but "the myth of the nation."[19] Were the Russians solely motivated by Socialism, the Soviet Union would be nothing more than a formal, mechanical, lifeless *technological* state. But Schmitt emphasizes the expressly vital, spiritual, willful and even satanic quality of the *technicistic* Soviet state. He remarks on its "prowess" in "rationalism and its opposite."

Schmitt is appalled that the European intellectuals of his generation have not recognized the Soviet Union as a very dangerous anti-Western spirit. Their self-absorption and resignation in the face of a supposedly soulless, lifeless and mechanical technology is hindering their ability to behave "politically" when confronted by a new enemy. This "amounts to nothing more than a romantic lament." Like the romantics, whom Schmitt thoroughly reviled, these intellectuals were ascribing subjective aesthetic value to a particular object, even if a negative aesthetic one. This is ludicrous, since that object, as they themselves admit, has no inherent objective content. These intellectuals remain preoccupied with it, and this prevents them from recognizing the technicity accompanying technology.

In the dramatic closing paragraph of Schmitt's 1929 lecture, he accuses his listeners of succumbing to that same mood which afflicted German intellectuals: "Whoever knows no other enemy than death and recognizes in his enemy nothing more than an empty mechanism is nearer to death than life." Such thinking was "nothing more than a renunciation of the struggle." Thus he calls for a "conscious self-assessment" in order to come to terms with historical realities — something the Russians have already done. They have seen through the superficial neutrality of the day. They recognize "the core of modern European history" and have "drawn the ultimate conclusions" from it: the age of neutralizations is over, conflict has returned. Europe fusses over the *status quo*, missing the historical moment "and thereby renounc[ing] its claim to dominate." As

19. See Chapter 4, "Irrationalist Theories of the Direct Use of Force," in Carl Schmitt, *The Crisis of Parliamentary Democracy* (1923), tr. by Ellen Kennedy (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1985), pp. 65-83.

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a result, according to Schmitt, it necessarily invites domination.

Appropriating Weber's *Protestant Ethic* thesis, Schmitt identifies the Russians as the new "ascetics" willing to forego the "comfort" of the present for control of the future. They will dominate their own nature for the sake of dominating external nature and the nature in others. He challenges European intellectuals to forsake the "comfort" of their organic/mechanical, life/death dichotomies and their self-indulgent obsession with the *status quo* and to define the West in opposition to the satanic force in the East. If they choose to sit idly by and view Russia as a lifeless "nothingness," they will succumb to the identical fate of all previous ruling orders who refused to see in burgeoning, self-abnegating movements their own future rulers. Like those who initially ridiculed and denounced the early Christians or the radical Protestants, only to be swept away in the wave of their eventual triumph, European intellectuals face the prospect of being held under the sway of the "inner-worldly activism" looming on the horizon.[20]

That an essay so explicitly directed at a Central European audience was presented in Barcelona might at first seem strange. Not only strange; it was historically ironic. After all, Spain was the site of what may have been the last truly great friend-enemy encounter involving the West before the 20th century — the confrontation between Christendom and Islam in 1492. Schmitt, the cleric of the next great confrontation between East and West, was of course mistaken about the battle lines in the cataclysmic conflict that would eventually begin in 1939, although he turned out to have been correct after 1945. But there are at least some superficial similarities between 1492 and that conflict which would begin a decade after Schmitt's 1929 lecture. Moslems were not the only enemy named by Christian Spain in 1492 and the Soviet Union was certainly not Germany's exclusive or even initial enemy in WWII. Schmitt seemingly is unconcerned here with the fact that in confrontations of apocalyptic scale those who decide "politically" may identify not only an external but an internal enemy, which can be dealt with by means of expulsion or even extermination. Admonitions to recognize new friends and enemies on a continental or global scale, whether originating in Barcelona, Spain or Cambridge, Massachusetts, may be politically necessary, but in certain circumstances they also may be reckless and irresponsible.

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20. Cf. Weber's discussion of "inner-worldly *asceticism*" in *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* (1904-5), tr. by Talcott Parsons (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958).

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The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations(1929)

Carl Schmitt

We in Central Europe live under the eyes of the Russians. For a century their psychological gaze has seen through our great words and institutions. Their vitality is strong enough to seize our knowledge and technology as weapons. Their prowess in rationalism and its opposite, as well as their potential for good and evil in orthodoxy, is overwhelming. They have realized the union of Socialism and Slavism, which already in 1848 Donoso Cortès said would be the decisive event of the next century.[1]

This is our situation. We can no longer say anything worthwhile about culture and history without first becoming aware of our own cultural and historical situation. That all historical knowledge is present knowledge, that such knowledge obtains its light and intensity from the present and in the most profound sense only serves the present, because all spirit is only present spirit, has been said by many since Hegel, best of all by Benedetto Croce. Along with many famous historians of the last generation, we have the simple truth before our eyes. There is no longer anyone today who would be deceived by the accumulation of facts as to how

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* Translated by Matthias Konzett and John P. McCormick from "Das Zeitalter der Neutralisierungen und Entpolitisierungen (1929)," in Carl Schmitt, *Der Begriff des Politischen: Text von 1932 mit einem Vorwort und drei Corollarien* (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1963), pp. 79-95.

1. Cf. Carl Schmitt, *Donoso Cortès in gesamteuropäischer Interpretation: Vier Aufsätze* (Cologne: Greven Verlag, 1950), pp. 61ff. and 77ff.

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much of historical representation and construction is fulfilled by naive projections and identifications. Thus we must first be aware of our own historical situation.

The remark about the Russians was intended to remind us of this. Such a conscious assessment is difficult today, but for this reason all the more necessary. All signs point to the fact that in 1929 we in Europe still live in a period of exhaustion and efforts at restoration, as is common and understandable after great wars. Following the allied war against France, which lasted twenty years, almost a whole generation of Europeans was in a similar state of mind, which after 1815 could be reduced to the formula: legitimacy of the *status quo*. At such a time, all arguments actually entail less the revival of things past or disappearing than a desperate foreign and domestic policy: the *status quo*, what else? In the interim, the calm mood of restoration brought forth a rapid and uninterrupted development of new things and new circumstances whose meaning and direction are hidden behind the restored facades. When the decisive moment arrives, the legitimating foreground vanishes like an empty phantom.

The Russians have taken the European 19th century at its word, understood its core ideas and drawn the ultimate conclusions from its cultural premises. We always live in the eye of the more radical brother, who compels us to draw the practical conclusion and pursue it to the end. Aside from foreign and domestic policy prognoses, one thing is certain: that the anti-religion of technicity has been put into practice on Russian soil, that there a state arose which is more intensely statist than any ruled by the absolute princes — Philip II, Louis XIV or Frederick the Great. Our present situation can be understood only as the consequence of the last centuries of European development; it completes and transcends specific European ideas and demonstrates in one enormous climax the core of modern European history.

The Successive Stages of Changing Central Spheres

Let us recall the stages in which the European mind has moved over the last four centuries and the various intellectual spheres in which it has found the center of its immediate human existence. There are four great, simple, secular stages corresponding to the four centuries and proceeding from the theological to the metaphysical sphere, from there to the humanitarian-moral and finally to the economic sphere. Great interpreters of human history, Vico and Comte, generalized this unique European occurrence into a common law of human development subsequently propagated in thousands of banal and vulgar formulations,

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such as the "law of three stages" — from the theological to the metaphysical, and from there to the "scientific" stage or "positivism." In reality, one cannot positively say more than that since the 16th century Europeans moved in several stages from one central sphere to another and that everything which constitutes our cultural development is the result of such stages. In the past four centuries of European history, intellectual life has had four different centers and the thinking of the active elite which constituted the respective vanguards moved in the changing centuries around changing centers.

The concepts of changing generations can only be understood from these shifting centers. It should be emphasized that the shift — from the theological to the metaphysical sphere, and from there to the humanitarian-moral and finally to the economic sphere — is *not* meant as a theory of cultural and intellectual "dominance," *not* as a historico-philosophical *law* in the sense of a law of three stages or similar constructions. I speak not of human culture as a whole, not of the rhythm of world history, and am able to speak neither about the Chinese nor the East Indians or the Egyptians. Thus the successive stages of the changing central spheres are conceived neither as a continuous line of "progress" upwards nor the opposite. It is quite another question whether one wishes to interpret this as a succession of stages upwards or downwards, as an ascent or a decline.

Finally, it also would be a misunderstanding to interpret the successive stages in such a way that in each of these centuries there was nothing more than the central sphere. On the contrary, there is always a plurality of diverse, already spent stages coexisting. People in the same age and the same country, even the same family, live together in different stages. For example, today Berlin is culturally closer to New York and Moscow than to Munich or Trier. The changing central spheres concern only the concrete fact that in these four centuries of European history the intellectual vanguard changed, that its convictions and arguments continued to change, as did the content of its intellectual interests, the basis of its actions, the secret of its political success and the willingness of the great masses to be impressed by certain suggestions.

The transition from the theology of the 16th century to the metaphysics of the 17th century (which is not only metaphysically but also scientifically the greatest age of Europe — the heroic age of occidental rationalism) is as clear and distinct as any unique historical occurrence. This epoch of systematic scientific thinking encompasses Suarez and Bacon, Galileo, Kepler, Descartes, Grotius, Hobbes, Spinoza, Pascal,

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Leibniz and Newton. All the astonishing mathematical, astronomical and scientific insights of this age were built into a great metaphysical or "natural" system; all thinkers were metaphysicians on a grand scale, and even the typical superstition was likewise cosmic and rational in the form of astrology.

The 18th century shunted metaphysics with the help of the constructions of a deistic philosophy and was a vulgarization on a grand scale — the Enlightenment, literary appropriations of the great accomplishments of the 17th century, humanism and rationalism. One can follow in detail how Suarez continued to have influence in many popular works. As for many basic concepts of morality and state theory, Pufendorf is only an epigone of Suarez; in the final analysis, Rousseau's social contract is in turn only a vulgarization of Pufendorf. But the specific pathos of the 18th century is "virtue"; its mythical designation is *vertu*: duty. Even Rousseau's romanticism does not yet consciously break the frame of moral categories. A typical expression of this century is Kant's concept of God. As someone once said (rather crudely), in Kant's system God appears as a "parasite of ethics." Every word in his *Critique of Pure Reason* — critique, pure and reason — is polemically directed against dogma, metaphysics and ontology.

A secularization followed in the 19th century — an apparently hybrid and impossible combination of aesthetic-romantic and economic-technical tendencies. In reality, the romanticism of the 19th century signifies (if we want to utilize the moderately didactic word romanticism in a way different from the phenomenon itself, i.e., as a vehicle of confusion) only the intermediary stage of the aesthetic between the moralism of the 18th and the economism of the 19th century, only a transition which precipitated the aetheticization of all intellectual spheres. It did so very easily and successfully. The way from the metaphysical and moral spheres is through the aesthetic sphere, which is the surest and most comfortable way to the general economization of intellectual life and to a state of mind which finds the core categories of human existence in production and consumption.

In the further development of intellectual life, romantic aestheticism promoted economic thinking and is a typical attendant phenomenon. In the 19th century, however, technicism still appeared in close association with economism as "industrialism." The most typical example of this is the well-known historical and social construction of the Marxist system. It holds that economics is the basis and "foundation" of everything intellectual and spiritual. Already in this economic core it

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clearly recognizes the technical — that the economic epochs of mankind are determined by specific technical means. Yet the system as such is an economic system in which the technical elements appear only in later vulgarizations. Marxism wants to think in economic terms and thus remains in the 19th century, which was economic to the core.

Already in the 19th century technical progress proceeded at such an astonishing rate, even as did social and economic situations as a consequence, that all moral, political, social and economic problems were affected. Given the overpowering suggestion of ever new and surprising inventions and achievements, there arose a religion of technical progress which promised all other problems would be solved by technological progress. This belief was self-evident to the great masses of the industrialized countries. They skipped all intermediary stages typical of the thinking of intellectual vanguards and turned the belief in miracles and an afterlife — a religion without intermediary stages — into a religion of technical miracles, human achievements and the domination of nature. A magical religiosity became an equally magical technicity. The 20th century began as the age not only of technology but of a religious belief in technology. It is often called the age of technology. But this is only a tentative characterization of the whole situation. The question of the significance of overwhelming technicity should for now be left open, because the belief in technology is in fact only the result of a certain tendency in the shifting of the central sphere — as a belief, it is only the result of this shifting.

All concepts, including the concept of mind, are pluralistic and can only be understood in terms of concrete political existence. Just as every nation has its own concept of nation and finds the constitutive characteristics of nationality within itself, so every culture and cultural epoch has its own concept of culture. All essential concepts are not normative but existential. If the center of intellectual life has shifted in the last four centuries, so have all concepts and words. It is thus necessary to bear in mind the ambiguity of every concept and word. The greatest and most egregious misunderstandings (from which, of course, many impostors make their living) can be explained by the erroneous transfer of a concept at home in one sphere (e.g., only in the metaphysical, the moral or the economic) to other spheres of intellectual life. It is not only true that incidents and events which make their mark on people and become the object of their personal reflections and discussions have reference to the central sphere (e.g., Lisbon's earthquake could occasion a whole flood of moralizing literature,

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whereas today a similar event would pass almost unnoticed); it is also true that an economic catastrophe, such as a sharp monetary devaluation or a crash, occasions widespread and acute interest both practical and theoretical.

The specific concepts of individual centuries also derive their meaning from the respective central spheres. One example will suffice. The concept of *progress*, i.e., an improvement or completion (in modern jargon, a rationalization) became dominant in the 18th century, in an age of humanitarian-moral belief. Accordingly, progress meant above all progress in culture, self-determination and education: *moral* perfection. In an age of economic or technical thinking, it is self-evident that progress is economic or technical progress. To the extent that anyone is still interested in humanitarian-moral progress, it appears as a byproduct of economic progress. If a sphere of thought becomes central, then the problems of other spheres are solved in terms of the central sphere — they are considered secondary problems, whose solution follows as a matter of course only if the problems of the central sphere are solved.

In a theological age, everything runs smoothly if theological questions are in order; everything else is "provided" by definition. The same is true of other ages. In a humanitarian-moral age, it is only necessary to inculcate morals, whereby all problems become problems of education. In an economic age, one needs only solve adequately the problem of the production and distribution of goods in order to make superfluous all moral and social questions. Mere technical thinking also solves the economic problem with new technical developments. All questions, including the economic, recede before the task of technical progress.

Another sociological example of the plurality of such concepts is the cleric — the typical representative of intellect and publicity — whose specific characteristics are determined in every century by the central sphere. The theologian and preacher of the 16th century was followed by the scholarly systematizer of the 17th century, who lived in a true scholarly republic and was far removed from the masses. Then followed the authors of the Enlightenment in the still aristocratic 18th century. As regards the 19th century, one should not be dissuaded by the intermezzo of romantic genius and the many priests of private religion. The cleric of the 19th century (first and foremost Karl Marx) became an economic expert. The question is how readily economic thinking will permit the sociological type of cleric and whether political economists and refined economic syndicates are able to constitute an intellectual elite. In any case, it appears technical thinking can no longer accomodate a cleric.

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More will be said below about the age of technicity. But these brief references are enough to evidence the plurality of the cleric as a type. As said above: all concepts such as God, freedom, progress, anthropological conceptions of human nature, the public sphere, rationality and rationalization, and finally the concepts of nature and culture itself derive their concrete historical content from the situation of the central spheres and can only be grasped therefrom.

Above all the *state* derives its actuality and power from the given central sphere, because the decisive disputes of friend-enemy groupings are also determined by it. As long as religious-theological matters were the central focus, the maxim *cujus regio ejus religio*[2] had a political meaning. When religious-theoretical matters ceased to dominate the central sphere, this maxim also lost its practical import. In the meantime, however, it moved from the cultural stage of the nation and the principle of nationality (*cujus regio ejus natio*) to the economic sphere, where it came to mean: one and the same state cannot accommodate two contradictory economic systems, i.e., capitalism and communism are mutually exclusive. The Soviet state has realized the maxim *cujus regio ejus oeconomia* in a way which proves that the connection between a compact sphere and compact intellectual homogeneity holds not only for the religious struggle of the 16th century and for the majority of small and middle-sized European states but always accommodates the changing central spheres and the changing dimensions of autarkic world empires. Essential here is that a homogeneous economic state conforms to economic thinking. Such a state wants to be modern — a state which *knows* its own time and cultural situation. It must claim to understand historical development as a whole, which is the basis of its right to rule. In an economic age, a state which does not claim to understand and direct economic relations must declare itself neutral with respect to political[3] questions and decisions and thereby renounce its claim to rule.

Now it is remarkable that the European liberal state of the 19th century could portray itself as a *stato neutrale ed agnostico* and could see its existential legitimation precisely in its neutrality. There are various reasons for this; it cannot be explained in one word or by a single cause.

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2. Literally, this maxim stemming from the religious civil wars means "whose region this religion"; essentially, it means whoever rules a given territory *decides* on the religion.

3. In an earlier version of this lecture Schmitt employs the term "social" instead of "political." See "Das Zeitalter der Neutralizierungen und Entpolitisierungen," in Carl Schmitt, *Positionen und Begriffe im Kampf mit Weimar — Genf — Versailles 1923-1939* (1940), Reprint of the First Edition (Berlin: Dunker & Humblot, 1988), p. 126.

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Here it is certainly interesting as a symptom of a general cultural neutrality because the 19th century doctrine of the neutral state belongs to a general tendency of intellectual neutrality characteristic of European history in the last century. In my view, this is the historical explanation for what is called the age of technology, which still requires at least a few words of explanation.

The Stages of Neutralization and Depoliticization

The succession of stages — from the theological, over the metaphysical and the moral to the economic — simultaneously signifies a series of progressive neutralizations of spheres whose centers have shifted. I consider the strongest and most consequential of all intellectual shifts of European history to be the one in the 17th century from traditional Christian theology to "natural" science. Until now this shift has determined the direction of all further development. All generalizing "laws" of human history, such as Comte's law of three stages, Spencer's developmental scheme from the military to the industrial age, and similar historico-philosophical constructions stand in the shadow of this great process. At the core of this astounding shift lies an elemental impulse that has been decisive for centuries, i.e., the striving for a neutral sphere.

Following the hopeless theological disputes and struggles of the 16th century, Europeans sought a neutral sphere in which there would be no conflict and they could reach common agreement through debates and exchanges of opinion. Thereafter one no longer espoused the controversial concepts and arguments of Christian theology and instead construed a "natural" system of theology, metaphysics, morality and law. Dilthey described this process of intellectual history in a justly famous exposition in which he emphasizes above all the great significance of the Stoic tradition. But the essential point for me is that theology, the former central sphere, was abandoned because it was controversial, in favor of another — neutral — sphere. The former central sphere became neutralized in that it ceased to be the central sphere. On the basis of the new central sphere, one hoped to find minimum agreement and common premises allowing for the possibility of security, clarity, prudence and peace. Europeans thus moved in the direction of neutralization and minimalization, whereby they accepted the law which "kept them in line" for the following centuries and constituted their *concept of truth*.

Concepts elaborated over many centuries of theological reflection now became uninteresting and merely private matters. In the metaphysics

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of 18th century deism, God himself was removed from the world and reduced to a neutral instance *vis-à-vis* the struggles and antagonisms of real life. As Hamann[4] argued against Kant, he became a concept and ceased to be an essence. In the 19th century, first the monarch and then the state became a neutral power, initiating a chapter in the history of political theology in the liberal doctrines of the *pouvoir neutre* and the *stato neutrale* in which the process of neutralization finds its classical formula because it also has grasped what is most decisive: political power. But in the dialectic of such a development one creates a new sphere of struggle precisely through the shifting of the central sphere. In the new sphere, at first considered neutral, the antitheses of men and interests unfold with a new intensity and become increasingly sharper. Europeans always have wandered from a conflictual to a neutral sphere, and always the newly won neutral sphere has become immediately another arena of struggle, once again necessitating the search for a new neutral sphere. Scientific thinking was also unable to achieve peace. The religious wars evolved into the still cultural yet already economically determined national wars of the 19th century and finally into economic wars.

The evidence of the widespread contemporary belief in technology is based only on the proposition that the absolute and ultimate neutral ground has been found in technology, since apparently there is nothing more neutral. Technology serves everyone, just as radio is utilized for news of all kinds or as the postal service delivers packages regardless of their contents, since its technology can provide no criterion for evaluating them. With respect to theological, metaphysical, moral and even economic questions, which are debatable, purely technical problems have something refreshingly factual about them. They are easy to solve, and it is easily understandable why there is a tendency to take refuge in technicity from the inextricable problems of all other spheres. Here all peoples and nations, all classes and religions, all generations and races appear to be able to agree because all make use of and take for granted the advantages and amenities of technical comforts. Thus this appears to be the ground of a general balance, which Max Scheler advocated in a 1927 lecture.[5]

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4. Johann Georg Hamann (1730-1788) was a Protestant critic of the Enlightenment. Like Kant, he was a resident of Königsberg.

5. Here Schmitt is referring to a lecture Scheler delivered on January 8, 1927 at the Hochschule für Politik in Berlin and then again as part of a public lecture series at the University of Cologne in the summer semester 1927. See "Eigene Lehre von 'Politik und Moral' (Hauptgedanken)," in Max Scheler, *Schriften aus dem Nachlass*, Vol. IV, "Philosophie und Geschichte," Edited by Manfred S. Frings (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag, 1990), pp. 43-76. Cf. also in the same volume "Bemerkungen zu den Manuskripten," pp. 253ff.

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Here all struggles and conlusions of religious, national and social conflicts were leveled into a neutral sphere. Technology appeared to be a sphere of peace, understanding and reconciliation. The otherwise inexplicable link between pacifist and technical belief is explained by this turn toward neutralization which the European mind took in the 17th century and which, as it by fate, has been pursued into the 20th century.

But the neutrality of technology is something other than the neutrality of all former spheres. Technology is always only an instrument and weapon; precisely because it serves all, it is not neutral. No single decision can be derived from the immanence of technology, least of all for neutrality. Every type of culture, every people and religion, every war and peace can use technology as a weapon. Given that instruments and weapons become ever more useful, the probability of their being used becomes that much greater. Technical progress need not be either metaphysical or moral and not particularly economic to be progress. If humanitarian-moral progress is still expected by many today from the perfection of technology, it is because technology is magically linked to morality on the somewhat naive assumption that the splendid array of contemporary technology will be used only as intended, i.e., sociologically, and that they themselves will control these frightful weapons and wield this monstrous power. But technology itself remains culturally blind. Consequently, no conclusions which usually can be drawn from the central spheres can be derived from technology as such and nothing but technology — neither a concept of cultural progress, nor a type of cleric or intellectual leader, nor a specific political system.

So far the hope that a politically dominant elite would develop out of the community of technical inventors has not been fulfilled. The constructions of Saint-Simon and other sociologists who anticipated an "industrial" society are either not purely technical (but rather mixed with humanitarian-moral and economic elements) or simply fantastic. Not even the economic direction of the contemporary economy is in the hands of technicians, and until now nobody has been able to construe a social order led by technicians other than as one lacking any leadership or direction. Even Georges Sorel did not remain an engineer; he became a cleric. No significant technical invention can ever calculate its objective political results. The inventions of the 15th and 16th centuries produced liberating, individualistic and rebellious developments. The invention of the printing press led to freedom of the press. Today technical inventions are the means of the domination of the masses on a large scale. Radio belongs to a broadcasting monopoly; film, to the

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censor. The decision concerning freedom and slavery lies not in technology as such, which can be revolutionary or reactionary, can serve freedom or oppression, centralization or decentralization. Neither a political question nor a political answer can be derived from purely technical principles and perspectives.

The previous German generation was under the spell of a cultural decline; it did not have to await the World War, and certainly not the 1918 collapse and Spengler's *Decline of the West*. Expressions of such a mood can be found in Ernst Troeltsch, Max Weber and Walter Rathenau. The irresistible power of technology appears here as the domination of spiritlessness over spirit or perhaps as an ingenious but soulless mechanism. A European century which bewailed the "*maladie du siècle*" and awaited the domination of Caliban or "After us the Savage God" was succeeded by a German generation which complained about a soulless age of technology in which the soul is helpless and powerless. In Max Scheler's metaphysics of the powerless god or in Leopold Ziegler's[6] construction of a merely incidental, fluctuating and ultimately powerless elite there is still evidence of helplessness (be it of the soul or the spirit) *vis-à-vis* the age of technology.

The anxiety was legitimate because it sprang from dark feelings about the consequences of the just concluded process of neutralization. Along with technology, intellectual neutrality had become intellectually meaningless. Once everything had been abstracted from religion and theology, then from metaphysics and the state, everything appeared to have been abstracted above all from culture, ending in the neutrality of cultural death. Whereas a vulgar mass religion predicated on the apparent neutrality of technology awaited human paradise, the greatest sociologists felt that the tendency which had dominated all stages of the modern European spirit now threatened culture itself. To this was added the anxiety of the new classes and masses which had arisen from the *tabula rasa* created by restless technicization. New and even alien masses threatening to traditional education and taste continually arose from this cultural and social nothingness. But the anxiety was ultimately nothing more than the doubt about the ability to control and utilize the marvelous instruments of the new technology.

A result of human understanding and specialized knowledge, such as a discipline and in particular modern technology, also cannot simply be presented as dead and soulless any more than can the religion of

6. Leopold Ziegler (1888-1958) was a philosopher and historian of religions.

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technicity be confused with technology itself. The spirit of technicity, which has led to the mass belief in an anti-religious activism, is still spirit; perhaps an evil and demonic spirit, but not one which can be dismissed as mechanistic and attributed to technology. It is perhaps something gruesome, but not itself technical and mechanical. It is the belief in an activistic metaphysics — the belief in unlimited power and the domination of man over nature, even over human nature; the belief in the unlimited "receding of natural boundaries," in the unlimited possibilities for change and prosperity. Such a belief can be called fantastic and satanic, but not simply dead, spiritless or mechanized soullessness.

The fear of cultural and social nothingness sprang more from an anxiety-ridden panic over the threatened *status quo* than from a cool-headed knowledge of the peculiarity of intellectual processes and their dynamics. All new and great impulses, every revolution and reformation, every new elite originates from asceticism and voluntary or involuntary poverty (poverty meaning above all the renunciation of the security of the *status quo*). Original Christianity and all serious reforms within Christianity — the Benedictine, Cluniac and Franciscan renewals, the Baptists and the Puritans — every genuine rebirth seeking to return to some original principle, every genuine *ritornar al principio*, every return to pure, uncorrupted nature appears as cultural or social nothingness to the comfort and ease of the *status quo*. It grows silently and in darkness, and a historian or sociologist would recognize only nothingness in its initial phases. The moment of brilliant representation is also and at once the moment in which every link to the secret and inconspicuous beginning is endangered.

The process of continuous neutralization of various spheres of cultural life has reached its end because technology is at hand. Technology is no longer neutral ground in the sense of the process of neutralization; every strong politics will make use of it. For this reason, the present century can only be understood provisionally as the century of technology. How ultimately it should be understood will be revealed only when it is known which type of politics is strong enough to master the new technology and which type of genuine friend-enemy groupings can develop on this new ground.

Great masses of industrialized peoples today still cling to a torpid religion of technicity because they, like all masses, seek radical results and believe subconsciously that the absolute depoliticization sought after four centuries can be found here and that universal peace begins here. Yet technology can do nothing more than intensify peace or war;

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it is equally available to both. In this respect, nothing changes by speaking in the name of and employing the magic formula of peace. Today we see through the fog of names and words with which the psycho-technical machinery of mass suggestion works. Today we even recognize the secret law of this vocabulary and know that the most terrible war is pursued only in the name of peace, the most terrible oppression only in the name of freedom, the most terrible inhumanity only in the name of humanity.

Finally, we also see through the mood of that generation which saw only spiritual death or a soulless mechanism in the age of technicity. We recognize the pluralism of spiritual life and know that the central sphere cannot be neutral ground and that it is wrong to solve a political problem with the antithesis of organic and mechanistic, life and death. A life which has only death as its antithesis is no longer life but powerlessness and helplessness. Whoever knows no other enemy than death and recognizes in his enemy nothing more than an empty mechanism is nearer to death than life. The comfortable antithesis of the organic and the mechanistic is itself something crudely mechanistic. A grouping which sees on the one side only spirit and life and on the other only death and mechanism signifies nothing more than a renunciation of the struggle and amounts to nothing more than a romantic lament. For life struggles not with death, spirit not with spiritlessness; spirit struggles with spirit, life with life, and out of the power of an integral understanding of this arises the order of human things. *Ab integro nascitur ordo.*[7]

7. "Out of integrity order is born."

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Notes and Commentary:

On the Location of Socrates' Feet or the Immanence of Transcendence

Nino Langiulli

The following analysis attempts to make several interrelated points. The first is to interpret a line in Plato's *Phaedo* as a response to Aristophanes' ancient conservative view, i.e., that philosophy undermines traditional views and, *a fortiori*, morality and esthetics as well. The second is that the line is doubly ironic such that the second turn of the irony is Plato's reply to the ancient liberal view represented by the Sophists — the view that reality, morality and esthetics are only matters of opinion since there are no transcendent points of reference. Protagoras' dictum that man is the measure of all things means that only immanence is possible. In other words, truth and falsity cannot be known and opinion is all there is. The third point is a reply to contemporary sophists, a.k.a. anti-foundationalists or contemporary liberals. In order to vindicate humanity they maintain that there can be no foundations and philosophy as the search for them, it is either futile at worst or poetry at best.[1] The claim that there can be no foundations and that philosophy is futile is self-contradictory. The argument that philosophy is just

1. A recent book on the *Phaedo*, Paul Stern's *Socrates Rationalism and Political Philosophy: An Interpretation of Plato's* Phaedo (Albany, State University of New York Press, 1993), covers some of the same ground and even shares one of the conclusions reached here. Stern, however, has a different understanding of Plato's notion of foundations. Moreover, the line in question is not directly discussed, nor is Plato's pun seen as a more profound response to Aristophanes than the one given in the *Apology*. Thus Stern misses the double irony as the vehicle whereby Plato indicates his deepest understanding of both political philosophy and political activity. Nevertheless, on p. 145, Stern reaches the correct conclusions: "The character of human existence itself moves us to seek explanations in that which transcends humanity. As the *Phaedo* makes clear in its focus on death and immortality, human existence is characterized by an awareness of incompleteness, an awareness that confronts us most powerfully when we face our mortality." In attributing this awareness to Socratic 'rationalism," Stern seems to regard "rastionalism" as a major accomplishment. The difference between this argument and the one outlined here is that he locates the "ground" of Socratic philosophy in self-understanding (p. 180). This conflicts with what he claims in the previously quoted passage. A point of departure is not a ground. Consistent with what Stern writes on p. 145, Plato discovers the ground in the *order* of the world, which is distinct from the self, but of which the self is part. The result is a firmer and more stable awareness and appreciation of politics and humanity.

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poetry, and bad poetry at that, is Nietzsche's view. But unlike his liberal epigoni who are optimistic about humanity, Nietzsche follows his account of philosophy as poetry to its logical conclusion in a pessimistic humanism.

In a remark at the beginning of the *Phaedo* (61d) Plato seems to make a joke about philosophy.[2] This joke is a response to Aristophanes' portrayal of Socrates in *The Clouds* — which Plato also addressed in the *Apology*. In the play Socrates is the character who, suspended in a basket in the air, represents the corruption of Athenian morality: the gods are replaced by natural explanations; traditional morality is undermined by clever but specious arguments. By the end of the play, the young man, Pheidippides, denies the existence of the gods, beats his father and argues that his parents *deserve* to be beaten.

In the *Apology*, Plato describes the portrayal of Socrates in *The Clouds* as a caricature, as his own Socratic character gives his first speech before his Athenian judges: "Socrates is guilty of criminal meddling, in that he inquires into things below the earth and in the sky, and makes the weaker argument defeat the stronger and teaches others to follow his example. It runs something like that. You have seen it for yourselves in the play by Aristophanes, where Socrates goes whirling round, proclaiming that he is walking on air, and uttering a great deal of nonsense about things of which I know nothing whatsoever" (19 b-c).[3]

According to Socrates (in *Apology* 23d), this is a standard charge against all philosophers. They do not have their feet on the ground because their heads are in the clouds, asking questions about matters which everyone else takes for granted or things beyond ordinary human experience and thereby not worth knowing. They challenge common-sense, but refuse to accept the consequences of such challenges. By means of these challenges, they attract those young people eager for change and tired of old views, teaching them rhetorical tricks which turn them into smart-alecks ready to jettison God, family, friends and country. Committed to the most theoretical activities, and therefore the most useless, philosophers should best be ignored.

What Aristophanes portrays dangling from a basket are what today are called "intellectuals." And who fits the role better than Socrates? In the *Phaedo*, however, Plato offers his retort in a cryptic and seemingly negligible remark concerning the relation between philosophy, the soul and mortality: "And as he spoke he lowered his feet to the ground and sat like this for the rest of the discussion" (61d). Socrates does not have his feet dangling in mid-air, but planted squarely on the ground. The discussion in the *Phaedo* is concerned with mortality. This is no abstract discussion for Socrates, inasmuch as he is about to be executed. As the *Phaedo* puts it: "At any rate, said Socrates, I hardly think that anyone who hears us now — even a comic poet — would say that I am wasting time and

2. For some sense of Plato's use of irony, see *Phaedro* (276d), *Republic* (536c), *Statesman* (268d), *Timaeus* (59c), *Laws* (685a). Compare also Aristotle's *Politics*, Bk. II, Ch. 6 (1265a6) and Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony*.

3. All of the quotations from Plato's dialogues are from Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, eds., Plato, *The Collected Dialogues* (New York: Pantheon, 1961).

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discoursing on subjects which do not concern me" (69c). This remark is corroborated by Plato when, speaking of arguments in general and of the arguments for immortality in particular, he has Socrates say: "We must not let it enter our minds that there may be no validity in argument. On the contrary, we should recognize that we ourselves are still intellectual invalids, but that we must brace ourselves and do our best to become healthy — you and the others partly with a view to the rest of your lives, but I directly in view of my death, because at the moment I am in danger of regarding it not philosophically but self-assertively. You know how, in an argument, people who have no real education care nothing for the facts of the case, and are only anxious to get their point of view accepted by the audience? Well, I feel that at this moment I am as bad as they are, only with this difference, that my anxiety will not be to convince my audience except incidentally, but to produce the strongest possible conviction in myself" (90E-91B). Socrates has his feet on the ground; he is discussing a question of the utmost relevance to himself and he is deadly serious about it.

Although Socrates has been accused of being impractical, with his feet off the ground, he is, according to Aristotle,[4] actually concerned with earthly matters, morals and politics: ". . . for I spend all my time going about trying to persuade you, young and old, to make your first and chief concern not for your bodies nor for your possessions, but for the highest welfare of your souls, proclaiming as I go 'Wealth does not bring goodness, but goodness brings wealth and every other blessing both to the individual and to the State' . . . It is literally true (even if it sounds rather comical) that God has specially appointed me to this city, as though it were a large thoroughbred horse which, because of its great size, is inclined to be lazy and needs the stimulation of some stinging fly. It seems to me God has attached me to this city to perform the office of such a fly" (*Apology* 30b; 30e). Pest though he may be, he is dealing with human affairs and to that extent his feet are on the ground.

But in the *Phaedo*, the discussion about ethereal things such as the soul (or the "forms") is about things not on the earth nor of the earth but "above" it. The discussion turns out to be not about "human" but "divine" things: "If all these absolute realities, such as beauty and goodness, which we are always talking about, really exist: if it is to them as we rediscover our own former knowledge of them, that we refer, as copies to their patterns, all the objects of our physical perception — if these realities exist, does it not follow that our souls must exist too even before our birth, whereas if they do not exist, our discussion would seem a waste of time" (76e). As such, Socrates' feet are not only in the clouds, but "above" and "beyond" them. This may explain another odd comment from the very writer and chief speaker of the *Phaedo*: "Plato was ill" (59b) and not present for the discussion, suggesting his separation not only from "dubious" arguments for immortality but also from high-flying philosophy.[5] On the one

4. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, Bk. I, ch. 6, (1987b).
5. Ann Hartle, *Death and the Disinterested Spectator* (Albany: SUNY Press, 1986), pp. 81-83.

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hand, a discussion of mortality, immortality and the nature of the soul seems perfectly appropriate for someone who is about to die. Yet the discussion is unmistakenly about the "divine," not the "human." Hence the platonic irony. But there is another twist to it — the final twist. Just as with other things human, the irony cannot be endless, or else it could not be understood.

If there is a tension between politics and philosophy, as the *Apology* and other dialogues claim, and if it is proper to inquire about ultimate grounds, even if the inquiry concludes that there are no such grounds, then it follows that when the philosopher is concerned with metaphysics he does have his feet on the ground; this is to say, contrary to the arguments of current anti-foundationalists, e.g., the later Heidegger, Derrida, Rorty and their followers, the constitutive element of metaphysics is *inquiry* itself. This is true of every period, whether it be the ancient, the medieval, the modern or today. It also matters not whether the priority is ontological or epistemological. For to begin with one is to reach the other. The even halfway serious posing of the question of whether or not there is a fundamental sense of "reality" is deep into foundations. The particular *answer* that is proposed by any given inquiry is of secondary importance in determining whether or not a foundational endeavor takes place. The fact alone that an investigation has seriously begun is sufficient.

Here is the *telos* of philosophy: a theme Plato tackles in dialogues as diverse as *Parmenides*, the *Sophist*, the *Apology* and *Phaedo*. Similarly, the tensions between politics and philosophy lurk in every corner of the *Apology*, along with conflicts between politics, poetry, *techne* (the artisans) and philosophy. Plato speaks dramatically of the dangers of politics to philosophy in relating the risks to Socrates both from democracy (*Apology* 32a-c) and oligarchy (*Apology* 32c-e). The risks from the latter are particularly poignant inasmuch as its leaders had been "students" of Socrates. The corruption of a philosopher's teaching by political activists seeking to change political relations, even by the most "faithful," is not uncommon. This sort of change has been integral to the agenda of much of the "modern project." The aim has been to change things, and the effort has not been unsuccessful, but at the cost of "authenticity." Differently put, how much and what kind of changes are compatible with "authenticity"? A lesson concerning having one's "feet on the ground" is in order.

Plato himself knew the temptation — and the price — of trying to abuse philosophy by using it to guide a ruler. His attempt to teach the tyrant Dionysius some philosophy so that he might govern well was a bitter disappointment (*Seventh Letter*, 345c-352a). It is not the role of philosophy to instruct princes or to plan cities. For philosophy to be of any use, it is necessary for politicians, poets and tyrants first to desire to understand the finitude of human understanding. Philosophy begins with the desire to understand limits. When this desire is clipped short, when the range of possible differentiations is pre-emptively hemmed in to make it more accessible, the result is the stingy "understanding" found among contemporary literary theorists. Using fashionable "methods" such as "deconstruction," they come to no more profound "hegemonic structures"

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than race, gender and class for their ultimate explanations. Unlike the poets in the *Apology*, these literati are by no means divinely inspired.

Today's "artisans" are just as unaware of the moderating role of philosophy as were their counterparts in the *Apology*. Indeed they scoff at the very suggestion of human imperfectability. Technology *is* becoming ever more powerful; but it is not omniscience. The moderate voice of reason with which philosophy speaks is neither the voice of God nor the voice of doom. The philosopher does have his feet on the ground, when he discusses "divine" things; for in so doing he profoundly understands his humanity and, in so doing, he acknowledges his mortality. The inquiry into the immortality of the "soul," which like the "forms" is universal and public, uncovers the radical "mortality" of the individual self.[6]

In the act of distinguishing the human from the divine, philosophy resists the most tempting and dangerous foundationalism: the individual ego as the sole arbiter of truth. With his feet on the ground and his mind on the "divine," Socrates is portrayed by Plato as the embodiment of philosophy, humanity, and mortality. In other words, it is in philosophizing[7] that both the humanity and the finitude of human beings is discussed in the most *radical* way.

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6. An afterlife for the individual self is represented in the *Phaedo* in the form of a myth (107d-114d).

7. In chapter 14 of *The Birth of Tragedy*, Nietzsche provides another interpretation of the *Phaedo*, of Socrates' life and death and, consequently, another concept of human nature. For Nietzsche, man is *homo faber* — man the maker of illusions, the constructor of paradigms, the creator of fictions. Those illusions are, of course, science, religion, history, mathematics and philosophy — fictions whereby human beings keep absurdity at bay. Nietzsche suggests that in the face of death, Socrates, that "despotic logician," senses the limits of reason when voices in his dreams urge him to practice and cultivate the arts. The *Phaedo* reports that Socrates believes he was already practicing the greatest art, i.e., philosophy, but that in order to clear his conscience and to obey the dream he set himself the task of writing poetry by versifying some of Aesop's fables. Socrates points out that a poet worthy of the name ought to work on imaginative, not descriptive themes. He goes on to say that, since *he was not good at inventing stories*, he made use of the already existing fables and versified them (60-61c). Nietzsche argues that this passage shows that both Plato and his character, Socrates, recognize that it is poetry, the creating of fiction, not philosophy that defines human nature. Better yet, philosophy is just a sub-category of poetry with which one faces death by making existence appear intelligible and thereby justified. If, however, Nietzsche's argument is sound, then it cannot be taken seriously. It must be regarded as another fiction. On the other hand, if his argument is taken seriously, then his thesis, i.e., that humanity is defined by illusions is unsound. For Nietzsche's own argument is not a poem; it is a philosophic statement, false though it may be. Again, to say that poetry defines human nature is to philosophize. Furthermore poetry, as Nietzsche himself claims, aims at domination of nature through the creation of fictions. The poet is a "fabricator" like the gods. Philosophy, however, seeks to *understand* nature (and everything else — including poetry) in order to say something true. Finally, what Socrates does in the face of death, as the *Phaedo* bears out, is not poetry but philosophy. The myths that supplement the arguments for immortality are not higher truths but ways of showing the limits of reason and, therefore, the limits of human nature.

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Reviews:

Between Cosmopolitanism and Ethnocentrism: Max Weber in the Nineties

Max Weber, *Landarbeiterfrage, Nationalstaat und Volkswirtschaftspolitik. Schriften und Reden 1892-1899*, edited by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Rita Aldenhoff (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1993), Vol. 4 of the *Max Weber Gesamtausgabe* (MWGA), 1012 pp.

Max Weber entered German politics in the 1890s as a nationalist demagogue expounding on ethnic conflict, national integration and world market strategy. By coincidence, his writings and speeches of this decade appear in the complete edition of his works in the 1990s — at a time when issues of national identity and unification, ethnic cleansing and civil war, mass migration and world recession, the fate of old alliances and the breakup of empires have come to the fore again.

Weber's psychological collapse at the end of the decade ended his political prospects as well as his academic career, setting him on a path of idiosyncratic private scholarship which ultimately made him world-famous.[1] Today Weber's cosmopolitan sociology is usually juxtaposed to his particular brand of nationalistic politics. To be sure, he was a man of his time and place. But some of his political rhetoric provided ammunition for both sides in the NATO armament debate as recently as a decade ago.[2] More to the point, however, is that Weber advocated what turned out to be the right economic strategy for Germany, which many Germans took seriously only after losing two world wars, namely that economic growth and prosperity are achieved primarily through peaceful competition in a relatively open world market. At the same time he favored policies of ethnic exclusion that are again very much at issue today.

Despite all differences, the present *fin de siècle* invites historical comparison through a reexamination of Weber's writings and speeches. The unexpected German reunification which resulted from the collapse of the Soviet Union has brought forth some striking similarities between the two eras. First of all, as under Bismarck's Reich, there is today a united but not really unified Germany,

1. For the latest psychiatric assessment of Weber's illness, see J. Frommer and Sabine Frommer, "Max Webers Krankheit — soziologische Aspekte der depressiven Struktur," in *Fortschritte der Neurologie — Psychiatrie*, Vol. 61, No. 5 (1993), pp. 161-171.

2. See my essay "Max Weber's Ethics and the Peace Movement Today," in *Theory and Society* 13 (1984), pp. 491-511.

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the eastern and western parts remaining two different economies and cultures. (As Weber put it in 1896: "The two regions are in economic respects so alien to one another that they look like two very different states" [803].) In the East an old mode of production has disintegrated. Then the big estates were in economic distress and often broken up, now the large cooperatives that Wilhelm Liebknecht advocated as a socialist solution in the 1890s and that were tried in Communist Germany have been dissolved. Vast numbers of people lose their livelihood as world-market pressures are increasing. The Russian markets, a geographically natural outlet, are unavailable; Russia wants capital more than goods. Again East Germany is a drain on West Germany. Neither its resources nor its labor force are needed. (Weber wrote in 1894: "The soil conditions of eastern Prussia are so poor that from the viewpoint of the world economy two thirds of the land could easily be left uncultivated if it is merely a matter of grain supply" [334].) Easterners migrate west, aggravating the tight labor market and increasing unemployment. There is also an influx of ethnic aliens from across the eastern borders.[3] Xenophobia is on the rise again and old anti-Polish prejudices are flaring up, especially among East Germans. Agricultural pressure groups are as strong as ever. Again taxpayers must subsidize vast amounts of unnecessary agricultural production. A battle between freetraders and protectionists is raging. Those who believe that in the aggregate free trade benefits all partners are losing ground to those who think in zero-sum terms.

Similarities extend to the European Community. The fluid situation in Eastern Europe has reawakened memories of *Mitteleuropa* — Friedrich Naumann's popular WWI slogan. Was not France, the old enemy, even then considered a possible *Mitteleuropa* member, voluntary or not? For that matter, the EC can even be looked at from a two-hundred-year distance, another *fin-de-siècle avant la lettre*. If we squint at just the right historical angle, can the EC not remind us of Napoleonic Europe? Do some French bureaucrats and agrarians not sound as if they wanted another Continental Blockade, this time against Japan and the US, if not even against England? Are not insular sentiments and strategies waning and waxing across the Channel?

From the vantage of some present-day concerns, the task here will be to establish the distinctiveness of Weber's partly hidden motives and manifest politics beyond the entrenched understandings of such in the literature and also beyond some recent revisionist efforts. As is well known, the basic picture of Max Weber and German politics was drawn by Wolfgang Mommsen more than thirty years ago (*Max Weber und die Deutsche Politik 1890-1920*), although the English edition did not appear until 1984, i.e., after a whole Weber industry had sprung

3. One parallel development did not occur: Whereas the German Democratic Republic imported thousands of Vietnamese workers who remained, proposals to import Chinese or African labor went nowhere and met "much amusement" at the 1893 meeting of the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, when Karl Kaerger raised the issue. Was Max Weber amused too? See *Verhandlungen, Schriften des Vereins für Sozialpolitik*, Vol. 58, p. 99

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up and Mommsen's thinking had evolved in other writings.[4] This was also the year in which Mommsen and Gangolf Hübinger published the first volume of the MWGA, containing Weber's writings and speeches during WWI.[5] Since then, Mommsen has coedited five more volumes of the MWGA.[6]

The question concerning this new "blockbuster" is how much damage it can do to Weber's reputation, containing as it does the writings of what one is tempted to call Weber's "frantic decade"?[7] Rita Aldenhoff has done a superb job in reconstructing the circumstances in which each of Weber's writings and speeches originated and especially in identifying Weber's respective audiences. It turns out that Weber gave more speeches before more groups than anybody knew previously. This is an important advance in our contextual understanding. But rather than dealing with these findings I would here like to deal with yet another context, the extended family history, which the editors considered to lie outside their task. Admittedly, some information about Weber's family background is fairly recent and even provisional if not conjectural.[8] Nevertheless,

4. See Wolfgang J. Mommsen, *Max Weber and German Politics 1890-1920*, tr. by Michael S. Steinberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1984).

5. Max Weber, *Zur Politik im Weltkrieg. Schriften und Reden 1914-1918*, MWGA, I, Vol. 15, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Gangolf Hübinger (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984).

6. Max Weber, *Zur Neuordnung Deutschlands. Schriften und Reden 1918-1920)*, MWGA, I, Vol. 16, ed. by Wolfgang Mommsen in collaboration with Wolfgang Schwentker (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988); see my review of this volume, "Weber's Political Failure," in *Telos* 78 (Winter 1988/89), pp. 136-149. Max Weber, *Zur Russischen Revolution von 1905. Schriften und Reden*, MWGA, I, Vol. 10, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen in collaboration with Dittmar Dahlmann (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1989); see the review by Alan Kimball and Gary Ulmen, "Weber on Russia," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 187-195). Max Weber, *Briefe 1906-1908*, MWGA, II, Vol. 5, ed. by M. Rainer Lepsius and Wolfgang Mommsen in collaboration with Birgit Rudhard and Manfred Schön (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1990); see my review of this volume, "*Sachlichkeit* and Self-Revelation: Max Weber's Letters," in *Telos* 88 (Summer 1991), pp. 196-204. Max Weber, *Wissenschaft als Beruf 1917/1919, Politik als Beruf 1919*, MWGA, I, Vol. 17, ed. by Wolfgang J. Mommsen and Wolfgang Schluchter in collaboration with Birgitt Morgenbrod (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1992).

7. This new volume follows by almost a decade the new edition of Weber's treatise on the condition of agrarian labor in East Elbian Germany, an overly lengthy elaboration of a large study designed by others. See Max Weber, *Die Lage der Landarbeiter im ostelbischen Deutschland 1892*, MWGA, I, Vol. 3, ed. by Martin Riesebrodt (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1984). Weber's hasty compilation was a *tour de force*, although it was not the barely readable and largely unread text that turned him overnight into an "agrarian expert" but rather his peculiar rhetorical flourishes based on it. Before taking on the agrarian assignment for the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* (for reasons still disputed), Weber published his *Habilitation* on Roman agrarian history and its significance for public and private law. See Max Weber, *Die römische Agrargeschichte in ihrer Bedeutung für das Staats- und Privatrecht 1891*, MWGA, I, Vol. 2 (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1988).

8. See my essays "Weber the Would-Be Englishman: Anglophilia and Family History," in Hartmut Lehmann and Guenther Roth, eds., *Weber's 'Protestant Ethic': Origins,*

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this family history is significant for a broader understanding of Weber's intellectual and political concerns.

Weber was acutely aware of his family background. He was not only the son of one of the nationalist founders of Bismarck's Reich, but also a scion of the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie.[9] He liked to call himself a "class-conscious bourgeois" (335), omitting "grand" (*grossbürgerlich*), but he criticized the older generation for failing to understand sufficiently the new "social question" as well as the new imperialism. Therefore he opposed radical free traders and purely international capitalists no less than welfare paternalists and "social monarchists." Weber's self-identification was clear to Heinrich Herkner, author of the famed *The Worker's Question*. On June 18, 1897 Herkner wrote to Adolph Buchenberger, finance minister of the state of Baden: "I suspect that similarly harsh judgments [about 'capitalist excesses'] on the part of my Heidelberg colleague Weber result from the fact that he identifies himself with these circles in many respects and that he is aggrieved more by sins within than without these groups."[10]

What was the political constellation at the time Weber entered politics? Bismarck had weakened political and economic liberalism with his conservative turn in the late 1870s, gradually liquidating the *Kulturkampf* and introducing protective tariffs. In 1888 the aged William I died. When his successor Friedrich followed him to the grave after a reign of only ninety-nine days, many liberal hopes (justified or not) were buried with him. Sounding conciliatory toward the working class, young William II began his increasingly "personal" rule with a welfare declaration. After twelve years the repressive anti-socialist legislation lapsed in 1890, the year of Bismarck's dismissal. His successor Caprivi pursued an export-oriented policy of trade treaties that lowered agricultural tariffs. The Russian border was opened again to seasonal labor for the East Elbian estates. Both the old *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, which Weber had joined in 1888, and the new *Evangelisch-soziale Kongress* responded to the new social reform mood, which soured quickly. By 1894 the proponents of agrarian and industrial protectionism toppled Caprivi, the National Liberals considered new repressive legislation, anti-Polish policies intensified, and the second half of the decade became the reactionary *Era Stumm*. Agitation for building a large fleet inundated the country. Propagandists fueled colonial enthusiasm.

Evidence, Contexts (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 83-121; "Zur Entstehungs- und Wirkungsgeschichte der 'Protestantischen Ethik'," in Bertram Schefold, ed., *Kommentar zur Faksimile-Ausgabe* (Düsseldorf: Verlag Wirtschaft und Finanzen, 1992), pp. 43-68; "Heidelberg-London-Manchester. Zu Max Webers deutsch-englischer Familiengeschichte," in Hubert Treiber and Karol Sauerland, eds., Heidelberg im Schnittpunkt intellektueller Kreise (Opladen: Westdeutscher Verlag, forthcoming in 1994).

9. It is not too well known that Weber descended from one of the wealthiest Anglo-German merchant families, which prospered for a century and subsidized the political and academic careers of Max Sr. and his brothers-in-law Julius Jolly (Prime Minister of Baden), Hermann Baumgarten (a leading liberal publicist), Adolph Hausrath (liberal theologian and church politician) and Ernst Wilhelm Benecke (geologist of Alsace).

10. *Nachlass Buchenberger*, Nr. 37, Generallandesarchiv Karlsruhe.

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The main stage Weber chose for his entry into politics was the Protestant Social Congress, in which his cousin Otto Baumgarten had played a leading role since its founding in 1890. The two cousins worked as a team, the one from the inside as an ordained minister and theologian, the other from the outside as a legal and economic expert. Otto, six years older, had guided Max through some theological and philosophical literature in his cousin's first year of study at Heidelberg in 1882 (with Max's mother Helene secretly hoping for a subtle spiritual influence).[11] But in time Max came to impress Otto with his grasp of Germany's economic and social problems. When Baumgarten founded a journal for the new Congress, *Evangelisch-soziale Zeitfragen*, he planned to appeal to both the liberal and the conservative factions. Most of all, however, he wanted to teach the economic facts of life to his well-meaning naive brethren. Good intentions were not enough, the pastors had to develop some understanding for the economic and social imperatives of German industrialization. In a 1890 letter to his mother, the redoubtable Ida Baumgarten, Otto explained: "How can I achieve this? I have won Max Weber as my political adviser. He brings along his economist friends and is able to check reform proposals against legal, social and economic norms. In this way we hope to make our own proposals on the basis of solid factual information and to keep the new fervor within realistic bounds. It is fun to work with Max, even though he is less a friend of labor and less convinced of the saving powers of religion than I am. But by and large we share the same position with regard to basic ethical issues."

Weber's rhetorical strategy must be seen in this context. His audience and readership consisted largely of Protestant ministers, professors and other *Kulturprotestanten*, most of whom appeared to him possessed of high ideals and low reality comprehension. Weber tended to get particularly shrill when such people, including close collaborators like Paul Göhre, Friedrich Naumann and Martin Rade, failed to bend in his direction, to choose unambiguously the "bourgeois-capitalist" over the "agrarian-feudal" option. When Naumann founded his National Social Association in Erfurt in 1896, Weber not only antagonized many listeners with a diatribe (619-622), but wrote to Rade about "political children like Göhre and 90% of the pastors present" and to Marianne about "the pastors' twaddle — this whole spectacle of political children trying to get their hands on the steering wheel of German development was miserable beyond all measure" (616f.).

In his infamous inaugural address (542-574), significantly titled (in the original version) "Nationality in Economic Policy," Weber found not only pastors and professors wanting but almost the whole country. Looking back in 1911 he observed: "Already in my Freiburg address, immature as it may have been in many regards, I fought in the most ruthless manner for the sovereignty of national ideals in the field of practical politics, including welfare politics, when

11. Cf. Helene Weber's letter to Fritz Baumgarten, Sept. 11, 1881. Unless otherwise indicated, cited letters are in the deposit Max Weber-Schaefer, Staatsbibliothek, Munich.

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the great majority of my peers had fallen for the swindle of the so-called social monarchy" (540),[12] the short period when William II offered the working class a carrot instead of a big stick — the ultimately rejected repressive bill of 1895. Thus Weber had national ideals but not a nation to go with it. Neither the monarch with his "personal rule" nor the *Junkers*, neither the bourgeoisie nor the working class and, of course, not the Catholic church were up to the national challenge as he perceived it. The "spirit of the petty bourgeoisie" (*Spiessbürgertum*, with the accent on "petty" in the pejorative sense) threatened to engulf the nation (341).

Weber never spelled out his ideals beyond sloganeering, but from his many speeches and articles a grand strategy of *Weltpolitik* emerges, most clearly articulated in his debate with Karl Oldenberg on *Industriestaat* versus *Agrarstaat* (626-640) at the eighth *Evangelisch-soziale Kongress* in Leipzig in 1897.[13] Germany's industrialization inevitably "nationalizes" capital and labor, i.e., ties them down within the national borders. Instead of, or in addition to, exporting capital and labor, the population must be maintained through the export of industrial products. In view of rapid population growth and declining opportunities for emigration, this process cannot and must not be stopped. Hence Germany must continue to industrialize rapidly and improve its international competitiveness. Protecting itself against cheap competition from grain-exporting countries, it must keep tariffs low in the crucially important trade with the most advanced countries, preeminently Great Britain and its empire. Effective stock and commodity exchanges are necessary, and attempts by the agrarians to uncouple grain prices from the world market through government pricing monopolies must be opposed. Capital and labor must be free to organize on a large scale, whether as cartels or unions. By slowing down east-west migration, pressure on western industrial labor markets can be eased and unionization facilitated.

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12. In 1913 Weber reiterated his remark about the immaturity of his Freiburg address and added that he "could no longer identify with it in many important points" (541). Yet he never spelled out what these points were. Weber's futile advocacy of an "honest understanding" with the Poles during WWI concedes factual changes but not personal immaturity. Cf. MWGA, I/15, pp. 187f. and 197ff. The Freiburg address has been translated by Ben Fowkes under the title "The National State and Economy Policy," in Keith Tribe, ed., *Reading Weber* (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 188-209. Weber chose the latter title for the published version.

13. See Keith Tribe's translation, "Germany as an Industrial State," in Tribe, *Reading Weber*, *op. cit.*, pp. 210-220. Tribe has assembled the best English background collection for the present volume, with important contributions by Lawrence Scaff, Friedrich Tenbruck and Martin Riesebrodt. Apart from the two cited translations, there is another by Tribe of the second version of "Developmental Tendencies in the Situation of East Elbian Rural Laborers" (pp. 158-187). Reinhard Bendix first provided a concise summary of Weber's 1890s writings. See the second chapter of his *Max Weber. An Intellectual Biography*, 2nd ed. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1977). See also Wolfgang Schluchter's essay, "Modes of Capitalism: Imperial Rome and Imperial Germany," in his *Rationalism, Religion and Domination. A Weberian Perspective*, tr. by Neil Solomon (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989), pp. 281-314.

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Therefore subsistence farming of German peasants should be encouraged with government support, preferably by buying larger Polish estates or commercialized *Junker* estates. The eastern borders must be closed again to Polish-Russian migrant workers in order to deprive capitalist *Junker* estates of cheap seasonal labor and to prevent "Polonization."

In sum, the widespread anti-capitalist and anti-socialist sentiments of the German public were detrimental to the "national interest," the big club which Weber wielded over every social group and organized interest in Germany. In a country in which most people wanted neither parliamentary government nor the capitalist (world) market nor a vigorous union and labor movement it was tempting to play the national trump card. Only an extreme nationalist stance made it feasible for a young member of the Establishment to attack everybody from the monarch and the *Junkers* on down the social ladder. Rhetorically, Weber appealed to his audience with a peculiar mixture of generational rebelliousness and resignation, flattering his elders while taking them to task. The extent to which he manipulated not just his public but himself as well with his grand posture is open to dispute. In later years Ricarda Huch suspected him of being an actor.[14]

Despite Weber's preoccupations with the German and Polish East, basically he looks westward, to England and beyond. With the exception of its rural depopulation, Great Britain remains the model to be emulated. Weber and his cousin Otto Baumgarten were fourth-generation Anglophiles, although among the last in a political constellation under which the traditional liberal and even conservative Anglophilia changed into Anglophobia until the road was clear for the cataclysmic showdown with Great Britain. Baumgarten and Weber were the great-grandchildren of the cosmopolitan Carl Cornelius Souchay (1768-1838), the Huguenot Frankfurt textile trader and merchant banker who amassed a fortune as an "adventure capitalist" during and after the Napoleonic period. Deploying his brothers-in-law and his sons Charles and John, he established partnerships in London and Manchester to which an international network of relatives was appended. In the 1830s the various partnerships of this impressive example of family capitalism constituted the leading Anglo-German house in England (in fact, one of the richest enterprises in the whole country).[15] Weber's and Baumgarten's grandmother, Emilie Souchay Fallenstein, shared in the family wealth and financed in 1847 the mansion in Heidelberg that has recently become the university's "Max Weber House." She smoothed the political and

14. See my essay "Marianne Weber and Her Circle," introduction to Marianne Weber, *Max Weber. A Biography*, tr. by Harry Zohn (New Brunswick: Transaction Books, 1988), p. xlv. Huch, renowned novelist and historian, made her observation from a romantic view of authenticity, but she may have been on to something. Was the aspiring young politician looking over his shoulder as he worked his audience?

15. See Stanley Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise in Britain. From the Industrial Revolution to World War I* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), pp. 91 and 145; and *The Rise of Merchant Banking* (London: Unwin Hyman, 1984).

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academic careers of her sons-in-law with regular subsidies. After her death in 1881, the five Fallenstein daughters (Elisabeth Jolly, Ida Baumgarten, Henriette Hausrath, Helene Weber and Emilie Benecke) divided up the fortune, part of which remained invested in Benecke, Souchay & Co. in London until its takeover in 1894. In the 1890s Helene Weber had a fortune of half a million marks; her interest income was twice the amount of her husband's salary as a Berlin city magistrate.[16]

Otto Baumgarten, who married his English cousin Emily Fallenstein (and soon lost her in childbirth), was committed to increasing mutual understanding between England and Germany, the two "Protestant-Germanic brothers," both in religious and political matters. He openly acknowledged his indebtedness to English thought in his efforts to make German practical theology more relevant to contemporary challenges. In a 1893 lecture series on the theologians Charles Kingsley (1819-1875) and Frederick William Robertson (1816-1853), he proclaimed: "There is no profession in which the German bent toward ideology is as strong as among clergymen. Long ago the reading of Shakespeare and Dickens, Kingsley and Robertson, and not least George Eliot wrenched me out of this mode and proved to me that a Christian realism which has the courage and conscience to face the people's real needs is superior to systematic idealist speculation."[17]

In my judgment, this English family context is necessary to an understanding of Weber. If his speeches and articles are read out of context, it may appear that he developed his political views in the abstract. Too often Weber has been interpreted as a disembodied intelligence, when in fact family ambiance enveloped him. From the viewpoint of the Establishment, he was first of all the son of his National Liberal father, member of the Berlin city government, the Reichstag and the Prussian Diet. In his own eyes, he was also the member of a far-flung clan. Here was also the family constellation in the 1880s and 1890s: Lucius von Ballhausen, a leading figure in the Free Conservative Party, was Bismarck's Minister of Agriculture from 1879 to 1890. Lucius had married Charles Souchay's daughter Juliet, a cousin of Helene Weber, in Manchester in 1864, the year of Max's birth. The Lucius family, the most prominent economic and political family in Erfurt, was helpful, if not decisive, in getting Max Weber Sr. his first position as a salaried city magistrate there — where

16. See Max Weber's own account of the resulting family tensions and particularly of the fateful conflict with his father in Eduard Baumgarten, ed., *Max Weber. Werk und Person* (Tübingen: J. C. B. Mohr [Paul Siebeck], 1964), pp. 629f.

17. See Otto Baumgarten, "Die Bedeutung des englischen Einflusses für die deutsche praktische Theologie," in *Zeitschrift für praktische Theologie*, Vol. 15 (1893), p. 242. As a teenager, Baumgarten wrote letters in English to his father Hermann. As a student, his brother Fritz took English lessons from grandmother Emilie Souchay Fallenstein in Heidelberg. Although Max Weber started English at the age of fifteen, he could not converse about intellectual matters. See Weber's apologetic letter to Edwin Seligman, New York, Nov. 19, 1904 (Special Collections, Columbia University Libraries, New York).

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Max Jr. was born. In 1888 Emperor Friedrich made Lucius a baron (*Freiherr*) together with Carl Ferdinand Stumm. When in 1895 Weber vociferously attacked Baron Stumm for his parliamentary onslaught on the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* and the Evangelical-Social movement (517ff, 522f.), Lucius' son got ready to marry Stumm's daughter, continuing the "feudalization" of the bourgeoisie.

Meanwhile in Antwerp Charles Gustave Bunge, who had married Max's aunt Laura Fallenstein, and his cousins Ernest and Edouard, played a leading role in developing the port. Ernest established Bunge & Born (still among the richest private firms in the world) in Buenos Aires in 1884 and swamped the European market with grain imports — to Max's chagrin. Edouard became King Leopold's broker and helper during the many financial crises of the calamitous Congo Free State, on which Imperial Germany had designs. He made a fortune with the rubber extracted cruelly from the native population. Weber accused the Bunges of having "no sympathy for an appropriate concern with the social question, but only fear of it."[18] When during WWI Weber spoke of Belgium as "that El Dorado of the bourgeoisie,"[19] he had the Bunges in mind.

Whereas Lucius' brother Eugen cofounded *Hoechst* (as "Lucius, Meister und Brüning") in 1863 and Helene's cousin Paul Mendelssohn Bartholdy *Agfa* in 1873, other relations did not do as well. Max's cousin Henry Fallenstein was wiped out when his Argentinian wool warehouse burned down in 1881. Henry's three other brothers, who also worked for the Bunges, did not become rich either. Max came to hold it against the Bunges that they did not do more for the Fallensteins, especially Frank and Laura, who went to Australia and the US.[20] When he saw in 1904 how poorly his cousins James, Jefferson and William lived in North Carolina as subsistence farmers, laborers and clerks, he was embittered that the wealthy Bunges had called their situation an "idyl." While calling for German subsistence farming in East Elbia, Weber apparently

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18. See Ida Baumgarten, writing from Antwerp on Good Friday 1895. She was, however, doubtful of the charge: "Up to now I have no confirmation for what Max says . . . . It may be true of the men . . . but Laura and [her daughter] Marie Huffmann are very interested in social reforms . . . and Emmy [the other daughter] sends Naumann's 'Die Hilfe'." Ida sympathized with Max's social concerns, but had a sharp eye for his and Marianne's high living. Reporting to her children from Freiburg on Christmas 1894, she observed shrewdly: "They are spending freely . . . What a sumptuous apartment and what furnishings! It is so obvious that they are both rich kids (*des Reichtums Kinder*), although there is no exaggerated luxury." On a later occasion Max expounded to her his theory of the economic inevitability of luxury; see his 1895 speech at Giessen, pp. 734-742.

19. MWGA,I/15, *op. cit.*, p. 80. In a speech in Munich in Oct. 1916 Weber opposed the annexation of Antwerp with the tactical argument: "We are not interested in incurring for our workers the competition of an alien people for the sake of the profit of some German shippers, bankers and entrepreneurs." After declaring that "Antwerp will always remain a non-German city," he added, mystifying his audience and the MWGA editors: "I know the city, I have relatives there" (see I/15, *op. cit.*, p. 177).

20. For Weber's complaints about the Bunges, see the letter to his mother Helene from New York, Nov. 2, 1904 (Weber-Schaefer deposit Munich) and the letter to Marianne from Amsterdam, Aug. 25, 1907, in MWGA, II/5, p. 373.

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did not like to see some of his own relatives suffer such *déclassement*.

This family story may help explain what otherwise looks like a purely intellectual or political interest on Weber's part. Take his intense curiosity about Argentina. It is true that in the course and aftermath of Caprivi's export drive and liberalization of trade treaties, Argentina was hotly debated in the Reichstag. Its plains had recently been opened to grain production. With low production costs and a devalued currency it could throw huge amounts of cheap grain on the world market and through Antwerp become a major supplier to western Germany. More accurately, foreign planters and grain dealers were undertaking this rapid expansion. As early as January 1893 Weber, in reporting on the agrarian survey for the *Verein für Sozialpolitik*, had written a page on the "social barbarism" (129) under which the recklessly speculative planters and the "half-savage trash" who intermittently worked for them lived their wretched lives — with a dig at August Bebel's socialist ideal of (non)marriage. A year later Weber expanded on the theme in a very detailed article on the colonists (286-303) and a brief review on the legal situation of aliens in Argentina (306f.). The article is a typical Weber piece — painstaking details leading up to sweeping generalization and rhetorical excess. The editors were unable to find out who gave Weber the wealth of first-hand information. Whoever it was, it seems that Weber had a special family interest in Argentina, involving the misfortune of Henry Fallenstein and the good fortune of Ernest Bunge, whose firm quickly achieved notoriety as one of the world's dominant grain traders.

As he made clear in the Argentina article, Weber was for Caprivi's trade treaties and for vigorous international trade, but he shared the conviction that became a self-fulfilling prophecy for his generation: a cosmopolitan era was coming to an end and "national interest" (whether cause or effect) had to be paramount. Therefore, "the enemy is internationalism of every kind" (303) — that of Eugen Richter's free-trade liberals (*Freisinnige Volkspartei*) and of the Social Democrats as well as that of pacifists and adherents of Ethical Culture. In his eyes all these positions made the unrealistic assumption of an "international equality of cultural conditions" (302), when in fact the opposite was true.[21] This led Weber to his polemically effective reversal of popular Social Darwinism, particularly in regard to the Poles, with whom he was obsessed at the time.

Weber looked at the Poles — 10% of Germany's indigenous population — with the eyes of a Prussian lieutenant who sees only despised *Pisangs* (peasants), the term used by German soldiers. In fact, he encountered the ethnic population issue first-hand during his officer's training in the summer of 1888, when the county commissioner Nollau of Poznan showed him some new, government-financed German settlements. Overlooking the vigor of Polish culture with its multitude of economic and non-economic associations, which had been greatly strengthened during the *Kulturkampf*, he concentrated his disdain on the Polish

21 This is, of course, the same argument used by Ross Perot and others against the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) in the fall of 1993.

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peasants and especially migrant workers.[22] With their lower wages and standard of living they undercut the Germans with their higher culture. This negative selection mechanism, redefining the "survival of the fittest," threatened *Deutschtum*, a term Weber freely used but prudently never gave concrete meaning. Relishing his "harshness and brutality" (339) before audiences all over the country, Weber could go so far as to say in 1896: "If anybody says that we have degraded the Poles to second-class citizenship, let the truth be spoken: We have turned them from animals into human beings" (622). He would even utter dark threats against those Germans who were supposed to become subsistence farmers: "We acknowledge openly: We want to take advantage of their hunger for land in order to fetter them to the *Heimat*, and if we have to trample a whole generation into the ground in order to safeguard the country's future, we would take the responsibility" (338). Was this just mindless rhetoric or did he consider what kind of "trampling" would be involved?

Despite offering programmatic leadership in the Freiburg address and at other occasions, here Weber had jumped on a bandwagon. In 1886 the National Liberals had passed the internal colonization law that initially appropriated one hundred million marks for the purchase and redistribution of estates. The underlying strategy was one of long-range "ethnic cleansing." On Lucius' watch as Minister of Agriculture, by 1887 33,000 Poles without German citizenship but often long residence (about one third Jews) had been deported on very short notice and the borders had been closed to seasonal labor. But actual developments soon subverted the nationalist agenda. The borders were opened again during the Caprivi regime and the *Junkers* increasingly pocketed the money (by 1914 several hundred million marks) while the Poles, by dint of their superior organization, bought up more and more of the land.[23] In

22. On the vitality of Polish cultural life, see the (celebratory) study by Lech Trzeciakowski, *The Kulturkampf in Prussian Poland*, tr. by Katarzyna Kretkowska (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990); William W. Hagen, *Germans, Poles and Jews: The Nationality Conflict in the Prussian East, 1772-1914* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980). See also Waclaw Dlugoborsk, "Das polnische Bürgertum vor 1918 in vergleichender Perspektive," in Jürgen Kocka and Ute Frevert, eds., *Bürgertum im 19. Jahrhundert* (Munich: Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1988), Vol. I., pp. 285ff. In contrast to Weber, his sometime friend Max Sering struck a much calmer note on the nationalities conflict in his book, *Die innere Kolonisation im östlichen Deutschland* (Leipzig: Dunker & Humblot, 1893). He was willing to recognize the achievements of the Polish settlement organizations and to accept the purchase of land in favor of Polish peasants. Weber ignored this aspect in his review of Sering (223-228).

23. In his new encyclopedia volume, Mommsen has felt freer to reach a historical judgment: "The settlement policy benefited the large German estates more than it pushed back the Polish population. Coupled with the mass deportation policy of the Prussian authorities, it led to a permanent poisoning of German-Polish relations. The settlement policy was an expression of that new, incomparably more aggressive nationalism that was first articulated by Heinrich von Treitschke in his article on the Jewish question and that had found such a broad response among the *Bürgertum*." Bismarck was not only directly responsible for the mass deportations, but he also used civil

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1899 Weber even withdrew from the Pan-German League because it was not anti-Polish enough; it was too solicitous of the seasonal labor needs of the large estates. His increasing shrillness was to no avail, and neither was the "stormy applause" he received from a western audience in Karlsruhe in 1897 for this example of demagogic razzle-dazzle: "Whoever makes it possible for an alien race, Polish or Italian, to accommodate itself to lower wages in Germany, thus acting against the justified desire of German workers to earn a living appropriate to German expectations, is an enemy of *Deutschtum*. We shall always fight him, be he a professor, journalist or minister — not as professors but as Germans, to the death" (*bis aufs Messer* — 833).

There was something deeply wrong with Weber's "agrarian expertise," marred as it was by ethnic fantasies. It was rural sociology with a vengeance. All that learning about the legal, social and economic complexities of the *Agrarverfassung* juxtaposed to a primitive understanding of the Polish question! Like most educated Germans, Weber was unable to face the facts of Prussian-Polish history.[24] Besides, he had his "developmental tendencies" all wrong. The dire cultural consequences he foresaw never happened. Many Polish peasants became "cultured" German workers, many others were "cultured" on their own. When Weber tried to woo his erstwhile enemies during the war, he even conceded that "with the help of their interest groups (*Kampforganisationen*) the Poles have advanced economically so far that we must no longer talk of 'competition caused by lack of culture on the part of cheap hands'."[25] His change of mind came too late, his good intentions to naught, when the issue of an independent Poland suddenly became crucial. Prussian Conservatives, Pan-Germans and many National Liberals were unable to respond to the new situation with anything but plans for intensified repression (the Nazis, nay, many of the same people, were to act on them during WWII). In 1908 the very success of the Polish settlements had led to a Prussian law on expropriation, which however was applied only sparingly. But by 1915 even Friedrich Meinecke felt free to come out with a proposal for "ethnic cleansing": "My idea has been for a long time to transplant part of the owners of Polish estates to a newly autonomous Poland that would be attached to us (sic) and thus to assure the German character of Poznan and Western Prussia."[26] By contrast, in 1916 Weber sounded positively benign in arguing that "questions such as facilitating

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rights protests in the Reichstag to threaten a *coup d'état* against its constitutional powers. See Wolfgang . Mommsen, *Das Ringen um den nationalen Staat. Die Gründung und der innere Ausbau des Deutschen Reiches unter Otto von Bismarck 1850-1890* (Berlin: Propyläen Verlag, 1993), p. 601. (This 800-page "monster" is only the first half of Mommsen's Vol. 7 of the *Propyläen Geschichte Deutschlands*. The second half will deal with the 1890s-1918 period).

24. For a recent reminder, see Adam Krzeminski, "Der Rest war Schweigen," in *Die Zeit*, No. 38, Sept. 24, 1993, p. 22.

25. MWGA, I/15, *op. cit.*, p. 199.

26. Quoted in Hans-Ulrich Wehler, *Krisenherde des Kaiserreichs 1871-1918* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck, 1970), p. 197.

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the voluntary resettlement of Germans from Poland to Germany and vice versa cannot be solved without an honest effort at a previous understanding"[27] Weber's contemporary Meinecke (1862-1954) lived long enough to write on "the German catastrophe," which was primarily the catastrophe of the Poles and the Jews.[28]

Weber's early battle against ethnic equality looks even stranger in light of the fact that his Huguenot ancestors began their migration as the original *réfugiés*, were long discriminated against in Frankfurt and elsewhere, but ultimately became influential parts of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural setting. English industrialization succeeded in large measure because the Lancashire cotton industry and its exports were organized by Frankfurt Huguenots and Jews, Hamburg Lutherans, and orthodox "Greeks" (Christians from the Ottoman Empire), who competed successfully with the help of thousands of German clerks and tens of thousands of Irish workers.[29] Without the multi-ethnic permissiveness of London and Manchester the family wealth would not have been possible. Moreover, during this period Weber maintained his international family connections.[30]

Thus a cosmopolitan economic strategy oriented toward the world market

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27. MWGA, I/15, *op. cit.*, p. 200. By 1919 Weber had changed his tune again, when the new Poland came into being and territorial disputes arose. In a speech in Heidelberg on January 2, 1919, he is reported to have exclaimed: "When you have reached the point where you have decided not to make any grand speeches but silently see to it that the first Polish official who dares enter Danzig is hit by a bullet — when you have decided to take the course that will then be inevitable — then I am at your disposal, then come to me!" See Marianne Weber, *op.cit.*, p. 631 and MWGA, I/16, p. 412. Passages such as these worried the American publisher Helen Wolff and the translator Ralph Manheim, when the English version of Karl Jaspers' 1932 Weber essay was prepared. The upshot was an "ethnically cleansed" version that dropped several offensive quotations. See Karl Jaspers *Three Essays: Leonardo, Descartes, Weber*, tr. by Ralph Manheim (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1964), pp. 189-274. See also the exchange between Hannah Arendt and Karl Jaspers in their *Correspondence 1926-1969*, ed. by Lotte Kohler and Hans Saner, tr. by Robert and Rita Kimber (New York: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1992), pp. 546-550. The original version did not become available in English until 1989.See John Dreijmanis, ed., *Karl Jaspers on Max Weber*, tr. by Robert Whelan (New York: Paragon House, 1989).

28. See Friedrich Meinecke, *The German Catastrophe*, tr. by Sidney Fay (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1950).

29. Chapman, *Merchant Enterprise*, *op. cit.*, pp. 166, 289 and 297. On international migration into England, see Hermann Levy, one of Weber's Heidelberg colleagues and admirers, *Soziologische Studien über das englische Volk* (Jena: Fischer, 1920), pp. 127-132.

30. Before his controversial appearance in the *Verein für Sozialpolitik* — his speech on "Die ländliche Arbeitsverfassung"(165-207) — in Spring 1893 Weber received his grand uncle Victor Benecke from London and his second cousin Paul Mendelssohn Benecke from Oxford in his Berlin home. In the fall of 1893 his wedding trip was to London, where he presumably visited the heads of Benecke, Souchay & Co. in the months of its demise. Shortly after the inaugural speech in May 1895 he welcomed his American uncle Francis Miller (aka Fritz Fallenstein) and his cousin Bill Miller in Freiburg, reciprocating with his visit to North Carolina in 1904. Shortly after his American relatives' Freiburg visit, he took his second trip with Marianne to England (the third and last was in 1910).

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and a narrow nationalist policy of ethnic exclusion remained uneasily combined in Weber's political stance.[31] Ironically, the tempestuousness with which he championed both positions defined him increasingly as an outsider in relation to the dominant groups within the Reich. Weber's "political decade" ended with his mental and physical breakdown in the wake of his fatal conflict with his father in 1897, but his political frustrations also had approached a breaking point. After his recovery, a "quiet decade" of scholarly work began on which his international fame came to rest and without which the present volume would not have warranted the great labors of its editors.

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31. In contrast to his vociferousness about the Poles, it is noticeable in these writings that Weber does not mention Jewish capitalists and eastern (proletarian) Jews, who were the targets of much anti-Semitic agitation at the time. Recently, Gary A. Abraham has tried unsuccessfully to come to terms with the important topic of Weber's attitude toward the Jews in *Max Weber and the Jewish Question* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992). Behind the thin veneer of qualifications, Abraham's basic argument is that Weber suffered from a severe case of liberal philosemitic anti-Semitism that vitiates all of his works and should terminate our interest in him as a "classic." Polemicizing against me, Abraham asserts: "Contrary to Roth, Weber's philosemitism exists on a continuum with anti-Semitism, notwithstanding the fact that the former normally [sic] lacks anti-Semitism's often murderous consequences" (p. x). Abraham wants to "show that Weber's views on Judaism and the history of the Jews are both pejorative and anything but an aberration . . . and that they express intolerance for the normalization of a separate but integrated Jewish community in society" (p. 7). Since this is not the place to deal with Abraham's search for another master key that can lead to an ultimate denouement, here I can only suggest a viewpoint for the record:

1. Despite his insistence on the importance of the specific historical content, Abraham ignores Weber's relation with Levin Goldschmidt, the first Jewish professor in Heidelberg who did not convert. For many years he lived in the house of Max's grandmother, Emilie Souchay Fallenstein, who herself traced her lineage to the Huguenot diaspora. Not only did Weber later help "get some Jews appointed to university posts" (p. 7), he was in fact Goldschmidt's protégé. Goldschmidt became Weber's *Doktorvater* in Berlin and hoped he would succeed him in a chair in commercial law. There is nothing to suggest that Weber ever expected Goldschmidt or his family to abandon their faith, even "in the long run."

2. The present volume and even more the forthcoming volume of the MWGA — the one on the stock exchange (I/5) — indicates clearly that Weber's defense of big capital and of commodities futures trading is also a defense of the role of "Jewish capital."

3. In the course of the first Russian Revolution, Weber for the first time tried to understand the complexities of a multi-ethnic and multi-cultural society. He educated himself on problems of the Eastern nationalities, including the desperate situation of the persecuted Jews (MWGA, I/10).

4. Neglecting all evidence to the contrary, Abraham gives the impression that Weber's views influenced the German government's policies. There is absolutely no causality behind the claim that the German government "shifted completely from Bismarckian to Weberian grounds" (p. 121).

5. Abraham's obvious difficulties with sources may in part be due to his equally obvious difficulties with the German language. Not only is his book filled with an appalling number of misspelled and/or ungrammatical German terms, there are also numerous translation errors and garbled renderings, not to speak of many misspelled names both obscure and famous and several mistaken identities.

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We began with some striking parallels between the 1890s and the 1990s. After another unification German nationalism is stirring again, while some old economic problems of East-West differences recur in different guise. The search for national identity harks back to an older ethnocentrism. Shocking to say, some of Weber's rhetoric could provide ammunition to some demagogues today. The Federal Republic of Germany stills claims it is not an immigrant country, when in fact it invited millions of *Gastarbeiter* — "strangers who come today and stay tomorrow" in Simmel's often quoted words. The *ius sanguinis* codified in 1913 is still defended to the point of absurdity. Hundreds of thousands of ethnic Germans from the former Soviet Union, many of whom cannot even speak German, are admitted, whereas Polish citizens who want to emigrate to Germany must prove their ethnic qualification on the basis of the invidious SS classifications from WWII.

Yet despite the resurgence of ethnic conflicts in some of the old European trouble spots and elsewhere, and despite another Russian Revolution with uncertain outcome, there also has been a powerful revival of international capitalism and the cosmopolitan bourgeoisie. In significant respects the proper parallel is not between today and Imperial Germany but with the decades of the German Federation (*Bund*) from 1820 to 1866. With all its difficult problems of balancing individual state sovereignty and federal power, the German *Bund* is the only historical parallel to the EC and the troubles of the Maastricht Treaty. Despite all the customs barriers, there was a functioning European capital and goods market with high individual and family mobility across borders. That was the world in which Weber's ancestors and relatives prospered before it was destroyed by nationalist and imperialist rivalries. When Bismarck annexed the Free City of Frankfurt in 1866 and embarked on creating his empire, Weber's grand-uncle Eduard Franz Souchay, the former senator and mayor, wrote: "The empire of the Souchays comes to an end, as does everything mortal."[32] Weber was born too late to be a cosmopolitan Frankfurter or to become an Englishman like his ancestors, but as he recovered his senses he stopped being an establishmentarian Berliner and became a liberal Heidelberg outsider, writing *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism* as his homage to the Anglo-Saxons who had combined world power and free institutions and as his critique of German authoritarianism.

Guenther Roth

32. Letter of August 29, 1868 to his wife Helene in the Stadtarchiv Frankfurt.

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Italian Pseudo-Federalism

Andrea Bosco, ed., *The Federal Idea: The History of Federalism from Enlightenment to 1945*,Vol. 1 (London and New York: Lothian Foundation Press, 1991), 373 pp.

Andrea Bosco, ed., *The Federal Idea: The History of Federalism since 1945*, Vol. 2 (London and New York: Lothian Foundation Press, 1992), 373 pp.

Federalism denotes a distinct type of constitutional order. Herein lies the difficulty of conceptualizing it. Most discussions of constitutionalism honor Carl Schmitt's axiom that a constitution presupposes a constituent people. But this approach fails to comprehend federalism, the constitutional order which arises from constituent sovereign states. The act of establishing a federation leaves the sovereignty of participating states intact. As a result, federated states remain integers rather than mere components of a unitary construction; they are federal *units*, in a strict etymological sense, rather than *parts* of something bigger.

The essence of any federal order inheres in the autonomy of its constituent states. Thus, a federal constitution can be nothing other than just that, i.e., a peculiarly federal constitution: it cannot *constitutionally* be democratic, socialist, liberal, or anything else. Although one, several or all constituent states may have their own democratic constitutions, burdening the federation *per se* with democracy transforms it into a unitary state which must be the responsibility of a constituent people. Likewise, although one or more constituent states may practice socialism, the transfer of any state's socialist powers to a wrongly labeled "federal" center deprives that state of its statehood, thereby ending its status as a federal integer. The worst collision of principles occurs when the attempt is made to graft liberalism onto a federal constitution. Precisely because a constituent state can be liberal in that it respects individual liberties, such a state ceases to be a state (liberal or otherwise) when its citizens look beyond it to some higher political entity to guarantee their liberties. The resulting conceptual and practical difficulties become an avalanche of confusion when a so-called liberal federalism seeks to guarantee, not classical liberalism's culturally delimited (i.e., parochial) individual liberties, but universal human rights.

Various confusions, but most notably the one between federalism and liberalism, pervade both volumes of *The Federal Idea*. Whereas federalism has historically been meant to recognize local autonomies and cultural particularities, most contributors to these anthologies are universalists and statists

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enamored of a global unitary state sufficiently powerful to enforce universal human rights. Such a state is imaginable and tenable, but not as a federal system. That the editor of these volumes, Andrea Bosco (and a clear majority of the contributors) think otherwise reflects their naive enthusiasm for federalism as a moral panacea. More to the point, as Bosco repeatedly acknowledges, they call for global federalism on explicitly moral grounds. Luigi Vittorio Majocchi's article, "Nationalism and Federalism," specifically argues for an ethical imperative to advance his federalist cause. This imperative is consistent with the Enlightenment's liberation of human reason: It is up to everybody within a state to promote changes in the directions indicated by the great 13th century ideologies, namely liberalism, democracy and socialism" (1/161). Majocchi's argument is simple, even simple-minded: federalism is increasingly necessary to insure the deployment of Enlightenment ideologies. Already well underway, contends Majocchi, is the federalizing of existing sovereign states and the internal transformation of every such state into a *bona fide* federal structure, with the perceptible end being a global federation rising from a myriad of localities through intermediate levels to a world government.

What would be the benefits of this global "federalism" for its intended beneficiaries? Suitably "liberated" (by triumphant liberalism) from all sorts of limiting social structures and suitably "empowered" (by democracy and socialism) to "make their own way in the world," individuals would be free to do very little. They would *not* be free to do anything to contravene liberalism, democracy and socialism. In Majocchi's new world order, local autonomies would allegedly subsist beneath a federalist overlay. People would be free to assert their provincial identities by, e.g., occasionally trotting out archaic folk dances. They would also be able to enjoy "true democracy" by voting in local elections, perhaps for officials to set the standards for locally produced goat cheese. In effect, such federalism would trivialize freedom. Once liberalism becomes the agenda of federalism, there is no escaping the erosion of substantive liberties brought about by the centralizing activity of a unitary, no-longer-federal state.

Majocchi's article is significant in that it faithfully articulates the outlook of the Italian Federalist School. Although essays by identifiable Italian Federalists occupy relatively few pages in the two volumes, Bosco makes it clear that readers are to approach the work as a whole from the Italian Federalist viewpoint. Even authors such as Ellis Katz and Bruce Collins, who have significant differences with the Italian Federalists, do not confront them directly. Moreover, Italian Federalist thinking is so all-encompassing and adaptable that it can readily refute or subsume most objections to it. Not coincidentally, Bosco and Majocchi are colleagues at the University of Pavia.

While neither of the most prominent figures of the Italian Federalist School — Altiero Spinelli, who died in 1986, and Mario Albertini — are represented in these volumes, citations from their writings appear frequently. All Italian Federalists are consciously neo-Kantian and readily quote Kant, especially his

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Perpetual Peace. They see war as irrational and immoral, the byproduct of the post-Renaissance system of sovereign states. In their effort to solve this problem, they play fast and loose with the concepts of sovereignty and federalism. Accordingly, every state must reduce or qualify its sovereignty by renouncing its right to wage war. States would transfer the right to employ military force to an immensely powerful world government based on (following Kant) liberty, republicanism and justice. Since, however, this global government would be empowered to *enforce* the vagaries of its pacifist will, there would be nothing left of the constituent states' respective sovereignties, the precondition and the abiding condition of federalism. The resulting pseudo-federalism would be a farce.

The Italian Federalists contend that technological changes in the art of war and increased economic interdependence have made sovereign states obsolete. "More precisely," writes Lucio Levi of the University of Turin, "it can be stated that the nation state has lost its essential functions, i. e., the control of security and economy" (2/292). In place of both the nation state and Kant's recommendation for perfecting it through liberalism, republicanism, and justice, Levi advocates liberalism *qua* government-enforced respect for individual human rights; democracy understood as the kind practiced by the contemporary Western-style parliamentary governments (with the proviso that these governments are to be reformed by internal federalization to make democracy meaningful at lower levels); and socialism *qua* social democracy (which may or may not require socialism as such, depending on circumstances, and which is thus compatible with the redistributive program of a "managed" social market economy).

Much like the end-of-history crowd in the US, the Italian Federalists see a universal and accelerating trend toward liberalism, democracy, and socialism. Allegedly accompanying this trend is a tendency to universal peace brought about, at least in part, by growing numbers of bilateral and multilateral agreements which functionally diminish state sovereignty. The Italian Federalists are, however, ambivalent about the functional integration of states. In general, they view it as a positive development, but one with dangerous potential. Global federalists, e.g., prescient sages like the Italian Federalists themselves, must ultimately guide functionalism in the direction of global federalism or else the process might paradoxically reinvigorate confrontational state sovereignties. On balance, the Italian Federalists are sanguine about the future. Thus Majocchi claims that "federalism is the latest step, not yet entirely taken, on the path toward human emancipation" (1/161) and Bosco writes in a matter-of-fact manner about the federalist trend present in European culture since the Enlightenment" (l/14).

Is there such a trend? *The Federal Idea* provides abundant if muted evidence to the contrary. Collins suggests, albeit with insufficient zeal to agitate the Italian Federalists, that federalism can arise only under specific circumstances. Extrapolating from the example of US federalism, he writes that its "lessons might well include the need for an external threat to foster federalism; the desirability of

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not over-inflating claims as to what federalism is or might achieve; and the requirement of a degree of consensus as to cultural and political values and aspirations" (1/64-65). The absence of these preconditions doomed various 20th century proposals for European federalism, e.g., the 1929 Briand Plan and the 1940 scheme for Anglo-French union. The recent difficulties with the Maastricht Treaty support Collins' claim. Yet, the Italian Federalists cannot be refuted by either historical or contemporary evidence. Levi regards them as ideologues with "a scheme for the analysis of the historical process with a view to controlling it and guiding it" (2/217). This ideological certainty leads Ira L. Strauss, a sympathetic commentator, to view skeptics of the alleged federalist trend as "victims of false consciousness" (1/340). In a similar vein, Majocchi writes of his "conviction that federalism is not an ideal, but rather the real movement of things. Whether it is or not, is not something which can be scientifically proven since there is no scientific knowledge of what has not happened. But scientific knowledge does not exhaust what we are. Beyond it there is the realm of morality, and political commitment belongs to it" (1/164).

But suppose that one's moral commitment is to an ideal other than the liberal one of advancing universal human rights? Suppose, for example, that one embraces the classical liberal notion of culturally specific rights limited by a particular historical and geographical context? Having this orientation, one cannot share the Italian Federalist School's optimism. Yes, the Italian Federalists' values of liberalism, democracy and socialism seem to be gaining everywhere. Similarly, there are all kinds of movements afoot toward international integration, at least at the regional level. These developments, however, are unlikely to lead to a meaningful supranational federalism, much less the internal federalization of existing nonfederal states.

Lest there be any misunderstanding of the sort that *The Federal Idea* makes respectable, it should be stressed that federalism arises from constituent sovereign states. The sovereignty of such states must persist if the federation established by them is to endure as a federal union. Any equivocation on this point favors the curtailment of local autonomies and, with them, the destruction of federalism itself.

Chris Woltermann

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Schmitt and Strauss

Heinrich Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen"*: Zu einem Dialog unter Abwesenden (Stuttgart: J. B. Metzler Verlag, 1988), 139 pp.

Heinrich Meier's study of the relation between Leo Strauss and Carl Schmitt is both elegantly written and painstakingly researched. It also has a valuable appendix containing all available records concerning the relation in question. Yet Meier's devotion to Straussian hagiography and demonology make it difficult for him to move beyond wooden images in order to recapture a sense of the affinity between his subjects in the interwar period. His book raises more questions than it answers, though it provides an occasion for rethinking a fruitful meeting of minds.

The most solid evidence of a professional connection between his subjects is the probing response by the young Strauss to Schmitt's explosive, thirty-three page essay "The Concept of the Political," which originally appeared in the *Archiv für Sozialwissenschaft und Sozialpolitik* in August-September 1927. Both chronological and social distance separated Strauss from one of the most eminent jurists of the Weimar period. But despite the gulf between this young Berliner of Orthodox Jewish background and a ordinarius professor from the Saarland identified with the Catholic and political Right, Schmitt reacted enthusiastically to Strauss' earnest and detailed analysis. He made sure through his own intervention that it was published in the September 1932 issue of the *Archiv*. There it could be seen as a critical response to the expanded edition of the "Concept of the Political" published shortly before.

Meier shows how Schmitt tried to accommodate some of Strauss' textual criticisms in preparing the 1933 edition. Yet, because of his decision to join the Nazi party, Schmitt did not mention Strauss explicitly or append his commentary to the revised edition. From three letters Strauss sent to Schmitt, one in 1932 and two in 1933, it is possible to infer other details about their relation. Though Schmitt apparently never responded to any of these letters, he did provide assistance to Strauss on more than one occasion. He acted decisively to publicize the commentary and intervened with the Rockefeller Foundation in 1932 to obtain for Strauss a study grant for research on Hobbes to be conducted in France, England, and the U.S. Strauss made two other requests of Schmitt, in a letter sent from Paris on July 10, neither of which Schmitt apparently took cognizance of: 1) to solicit permission to have Strauss work with Carl Friedrich on an edition of Thomas Hobbes then being edited at Harvard; and 2)

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to send a letter of introduction on behalf of Strauss to the French nationalist Charles Maurras, who, as fate would have it, despised both Germans and Jews. Strauss expressed a desire to meet Maurras, a self-described political realist, after finding "parallels" between his thinking and that of Hobbes.[1]

Beyond these letters it is hard to uncover any signs of a personal relation between the two figures. Thus Meier undertakes to fill in the empty spaces through the construction of a "Dialogue in Absentia," in which his unequal sympathies for the two participants become all too plain. The only evidences of a connection between them after 1933 are the few references to Strauss in Schmitt's exposition of *Leviathan* (1938)[2] and Strauss' decision to insert his essay on Schmitt into two of his publications.[3]

By the early 1930s Strauss was supposedly ascending to his putative position as the restorer of political philosophy, which would later be claimed for him by his avid disciples at the University of Chicago. Allegedly, his affirmation of the classics in the face of historicist temptation and his rejection of naturalism and materialism as modernist errors were already implicit in his critical study of Spinoza and in his epigrammatic response to Schmitt.[4] As Strauss himself suggests, once he left Germany and the historicists swelled Hitler's legions, he came to reflect increasingly on the political and moral problems of his age. Toward the end of his commentary on "The Concept of the Political," there appears the by now famous statement that Schmitt had set out to produce a "radical critique of liberalism," but had carried out his project within the "horizon" of liberalism. In short, Schmitt had attacked the liberal world of self-gratification while allied to Thomas Hobbes, "who had laid the foundations of liberalism."[5] Strauss' own alternative, according to Meier, "was to shoulder the far more difficult task of advancing toward that historical turning point which was Socrates in order to achieve a philosophically proper understanding of the founder of political philosophy and what he set in motion" (94). Strauss followed this path from *Natural Right and History* in 1952 to his later works on Socrates, written between 1966 and 1972.

Though Meier has helped to expand the fossil record for the evolution of a special relation while demonstrating the impact of Strauss' suggestions on Schmitt, he nonetheless does not do justice to their mutual affinity. Why would Schmitt in 1932, while scrambling for academic place and political influence in

1. This letter is reproduced in the Appendix, pp. 134-35.

2. See Carl Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre des Thomas Hobbes* (Cologne: Hohenheim Verlag, 1982), pp. 20-21.

3. Leo Strauss, *Spinoza's Critique of Religion* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), pp. 331-51; and Leo Strauss, *Hobbes' Politische Wissenschaft* (Neuwied, 1965), pp. 161-81.

4. For expansive statements of this humanist creed, see Leo Strauss, *Natural Right and History* (Chicago: Phoenix Edition, 1965); and Paul Norton, "Leo Strauss and His Critique of Historicism," in *Modern Age*, No. 25 (Spring 1981), pp. 143-54.

5. The German text of Strauss' commentary is available in Meier, pp. 99-125. See also the appendix to George Schwab's translation of *The Concept of the Political* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1976), pp. 81-105.

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Berlin, conspiring with Kurt von Schleicher against Hitler, urging President Hindenburg to continue ruling Germany by executive decree, and defending the suspension of the elected government of Prussia by executive order, have exerted himself to advance the career of Leo Strauss?[6] What reason did he have during the most frenetic year of his life to devote his energy to a young Jewish scholar who had not even been his student? Conversely, why would Strauss have written in depth and with obvious respect about a figure even half as loathsome as the Schmitt depicted by Meier? An embattled irrationalist seeking to reduce philosophy to action against an absolute enemy, Meier's Schmitt appears to be a religious fanatic and a babbling totalitarian. In his exuberant invective, Meier throws together phrases and paraphrases that seem for the most part unrelated. Thus near the end of his book (90) he quotes a passage about Jewish non-believers, composed by Schmitt in 1936 while the SS was investigating him for insubstantial anti-Semitism, as an illustration of his attitudes toward enemies in 1927.[7] Meier also tries to trace the Schmittian worldview back to the 19th century anarchist Michael Bakunin (84-87). He does this by placing a strange construction on statements in Schmitt's *Political Theology* — a tract written in 1922 that Strauss mentions in the commentary. Note that the references to Bakunin are drawn from a discussion centered on the Spanish Catholic conservative Juan Donoso Cortès. In *Political Theology* Donoso praised Bakunin as a worthy and honest enemy. He went so far as to contrast him to liberal parliamentarians who confound authority with rules and commercial transactions. But never does Schmitt represent Bakunin as his mentor. He is portrayed as someone who recognized the theological basis of regimes but opposed organized religion.[8]

Still other questions remain to be asked about Strauss' attraction to Schmitt. Why, e.g., did Strauss, who is seen as a political moralist and a defender of philosophical Reason, take so seriously a thinker whose study of political life rested on dramatically different assumptions? Why should Strauss, in his correspondence, appeal to Schmitt on the basis of their shared interest in Hobbes? If their attitudes about Hobbes differed as much as Meier claims and as much as their books on Hobbes would indicate, why did Schmitt recommend Strauss for a research grant to work on Hobbes's political philosophy? And why did Strauss show his patron the first part of his book expecting approval?

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6. See Joseph W. Bendersky's *Carl Schmitt: Theorist for the Reich* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1983), pp. 196-203; and George Schwab's *The Challenge of the Exception, An Introduction to the Political Ideas of Carl Schmitt between 1921 and 1936*)Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1970), pp. 94-100.

7 Two examples of the campaign against Schmitt as an anti-racist in S.S. publications are "Es wird noch immer peinlicher," *Das Schwarze Korps*, 50 (December 10, 1936), p. 2; and Otto Koellreutter's polemic, printed under SS auspices, *Volk und Staat in der Weltanschauung des Nationalsozialismus* (Berlin: Pan Verlagsgesellschaft, 1935). See also my exchange with Giovanni Sartori in *Journal of Theoretical Politics* 1.3 (July 1989), pp. 365-70.

8. Carl Schmitt, *Political Theology: Four Chapters on the Concept of Sovereignty*, trans. by George Schwab (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1985), p. 59.

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What follows are some answers that will please neither politically correct Straussians nor many European Schmittians. These answers do make sense, however, if one focuses on the point at which the two lives intertwined. Less relevant here is what they said concerning themselves ten or twenty years later — and even farther from the point are the contrasts drawn by postwar disciples and critics.

First, there is no reason to assume that the two thinkers differed as much in their assessments of Hobbes in 1931 or even 1932 as they would three or four years later. The first part of *The Political Philosophy of Thomas Hobbes*, which Schmitt read, does not cast Hobbes into the unsavory role of an amoral historicist. Nor does it anticipate the next part, by accusing Hobbes of replacing true philosophy with historical examples. What that first part explains is the alternate classical tradition, identified with Lucretius and Epicurus, which Hobbes is thought to have incorporated into his ethics. There was nothing in what Strauss gave to Schmitt that would have disturbed him.[9] The unkind material, directed, by implication, against the historically-minded Schmitt as well as Hobbes, came out later after Strauss, in exile, had learned from his old classmate, Jakob Klein, that Schmitt had joined the Nazi Party.[10] What Schmitt did know of Strauss' writings in 1932 were his commentary on "The Concept of the Political," the first and least offensive section of what became the monograph on Hobbes, and the critical study of Spinoza, which appeared in 1931. Schmitt, by the way, launches a parenthetical attack on Spinoza in his work on *Leviathan*, which combines anti-Semitic gibberish (it came out in 1938) with scathing observations on Spinoza's presumed lack of political loyalty.[11] The anti-Semitism, it may be assumed, did not come from Strauss' first published book, but Schmitt's complaints about Spinoza's intellectual dishonesty may well have been drawn from that 1931 publication.[12]

Second, Strauss did have a distinctive way of reading "The Concept of the Political," and though it differs from other, more prevalent interpretations, it may have been how Schmitt intended to have his work read. The most common and certainly most tendentious reading uses the Schmitt's essay to deliver a broadside against someone destined to become a Nazi. Meier's brief is a particularly learned presentation of this particular viewpoint, which dates back to 1958.[13]

9. This argument is presented at length in my own monograph, *Carl Schmitt: Politics and Theory* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1990), pp. 40-42.

10. Quoted in Meier, *Carl Schmitt, Leo Strauss und "Der Begriff des Politischen."* p.137.

11. Schmitt, *Der Leviathan in der Staatslehre. . .* , op.cit., pp. 86-89.

12. Leo Strauss' *Die Religionskritik Spinozas als Grundlage seiner Bibelwissenschaft* (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 1930) raises moral questions not only about Spinoza's theological skepticism but also about the views of political conduct in the *Tractatus*. Though Schmitt cites John Laird's *Hobbes* (New York: Russell and Russell, 1934) for an example of a critical study of Spinoza's amoral political attitudes and religious cynicism, he could as easily have reached the same uncharitable assessment from reading Leo Strauss.

13. Jürgen Fijalkowski, *Die Wendung zum Führerstaat. Ideologische Komponenten in der politischen Philosophie Carl Schmitts* (Cologne: Westdeutscher Verlag, 1958); and also

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Recently the same arguments have also cropped up in various newspapers and periodicals, tied to charges of fascist sympathy directed against those who have written on Schmitt without sufficient revulsion. A remark by George Schwab about reading Schmitt's writings of the 1920s, particularly "The Concept of the Political," may be pertinent in responding to this charge. According to Schwab, it is curious what for many, including Meier, is now self-evident (i.e., Schmitt's incipient Nazism), dawned on few of his colleagues during the Weimar period. From the Social Democrats to the Nazis, these contemporaries judged his membership in the Nazi Party to have been opportunistic — not the inevitable outcome of his earlier legal and political studies.[14]

A second approach to reading "The Concept of the Political" (which is also not Strauss'), is the one typified by Hans Morgenthau's dissertation on international law,[15] which adumbrates the conceptual frame of his later work on politics among nations. Morgenthau locates the political in the "*volonté de puissance*" motivating communities and nations, and shows how this collective power-drive can operate in the form of national interest without precipitating uncontrollable wars among nations. From this perspective, Schmitt's world of dangerous and dynamic beings becomes one of competing national interests. What brings national leaders to reason together is the fear of any one power dominating the others. Political realists do not hold that Schmitt revelled in human hostilities. The realist Schmitt describes the political as the most intense and hostile of human relations to underscore the need for disciplining this otherwise destructive force. States organized on the basis of national interest shared a legal right to war designed to institutionalize antagonisms.[16] Only such an arrangement can produce a state system that recognizes mutual legal rights as well as conflicts of interest.

Significantly Strauss did not accept either the first or the second line of interpretation: he read "The Concept of the Political" neither as a hymn to heroic irrationality nor as a call for international relations to be pursued without pacifist or utopian illusion. Yet it is also plain that Strauss read Schmitt differently from representatives of the realist tradition, but in a way that deeply impressed Schmitt and shows internal consistency. First of all, he treats "The Concept of the Political" as a moral critique of liberalism, having links to both *Political Theology* and Schmitt's lecture on "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations."[17] Schmitt appended this last study to the 1932 edition of

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Christian Graf von Krockow, *Die Entscheidung. Eine Untersuchung über Ernst Jünger. Carl Schmitt und Martin Heidegger* (Stuttgart: Ferdinand Enke Verlag, 1958)

14. See George Schwab, "Carl Schmitt Hysteria in the U.S.: The Case of Bill Scheuerman," *Telos* 91 (Spring 1992), pp. 99-107.

15. Hans Morgenthau, *La Notion du Politique et la Théorie des Différends Internationaux* (Geneva: Sirey, 1933), p. 43.

16. *Ibid.* 45-50.

17. Translated in this issue of *Telos*, pp. 130-142.

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"The Concept of the Political," thereby indicating some nexus between them.[18] In all these writings Schmitt as interpreted by Strauss speaks of liberalism as antithetical to any communal sense. The chief liberal concerns — material progress and a risk-free culture — are thought to lead to increasing worldliness and social isolation. Individual gratification becomes the sole purpose of human existence, as people try to live without facing the *Ernstfall*, i.e., the grave situation which arises periodically when it is necessary to risk one's life for others. Nicoletti maintains that the *Ernstfall* was no mere administrative or military problem for Schmitt, but provided existential deliverance from the shabby solecism of bourgeois culture.[19] Strauss anticipates Nicoletti's reading by stressing the spiritual significance Schmitt attaches to the breakthrough of the political. According to Strauss, Schmitt feared European pacifists not because they were deluded but because they "threatened" the specificity and integrity of communities. "Whether and when this entirely apolitical situation for mankind and the earth comes to pass, I do not know" (113).

While life in the absence of the political can have "interest," says Schmitt, it would consist entirely of compartmentalized "cultural provinces," lacking any unifying or elevating purpose. Strauss perceives in Schmitt's picture of a world without serious antagonisms an implicit "affirmation of the political" and a striking reassessment of Hobbes' judgment of the state of nature. While for Hobbes the contentiousness in the *status naturalis* necessitated the construction of civil society, as an escape from primeval violence, for Schmitt the natural human condition is to be affirmed as an escape from liberal society. Thus Strauss notes Schmitt's salvaging of liberalism through a change in its premises. Schmitt is presented as wishing to preserve, not rescind, the bellicose character of Hobbes' natural state (114-115) because he rejects the acquisitive individualism and culture-as-leisure associated with liberal man. And if he does treat with indifference, or as simply apolitical, the ethical distinction between good and evil, Strauss says, he does so as a despiser of ethics reduced to a cultural province. Schmitt seeks to focus on the possibility of heroic engagement in the face of the *Ernstfall.* He is therefore understandably contemptuous of mere discussions of moral values conducted for or by the clarifiers of cultural choices.

Strauss shifts the usual hermeneutical emphasis of interpreters of "The Concept of the Political" away from the question of conflict toward Schmitt's desperate attempt to find a traditionalist alternative to liberalism. Accordingly, the fear of depoliticization is derived from a concern about disintegrating moral and communal authorities. Schmitt's invocation of human conflict, Strauss

18. Attempts to link "The Concept of the Political" to Schmitt's understanding of technicism as the keynote of 20th century political culture can be found in Schmitt's leftist as well as rightist interpreters. For a particularly acerbic attack on Schmitt's alleged anti-bourgeois attitudes, see Richard Wolin, "Carl Schmitt: The Conservative Revolutionary Habitus and the Aesthetics of Horror," in *Political Theory*, Vol. 20, No. 3 (August 1992), pp. 425-41.

19. Michele Nicolette, *Trascedenza e Potere. La Teologia politica di Carl Schmitt* (Brescia: Morcelliana, 1990), pp. 39-81 and 152-95.

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insists, is meant to emphasize that at least one of those conditions that have forced people together in the past is still operative. Strauss quotes a passage from "The Age of Neutralizations and Depoliticizations" depicting moderns as captives of the "spirit of technicism" and of the "anti-religious mass belief in an inner-worldly activism." He presents Schmitt's "polemic against liberalism" as a "preparatory action," taking place in a decisive struggle between the mass belief in material progress (a dominant theme in Schmitt's 1929 essay), and "the opposing spirit and belief that still have no name" (124).

Schmitt is finally shown groping toward a post-Hobbesian moral stance, calling for an "integral knowledge" that can lead to a new human order. Strauss notes with approval the Catholic Aristotelian tropes that enter Schmitt's work by the early thirties (125). At the same time, he stresses the need to break decisively with appeals to the concrete historical situation. Only by deliberately turning away from the fixation on man's historically determined character is it possible to carry out the morally urgent "return to an intact and uncorrupted nature." Strauss' warnings about Schmitt's continued appeals to the historical moment foreshadows a leitmotiv in most of his later writings — the polarity between historicity and nature. Strauss' devotees would not be surprised to discover this theme being raised in 1932, inasmuch as it also makes an anticipatory appearance in Strauss' critical remarks about Spinoza. Equally noteworthy, however, Strauss does not distinguish his own position from the conservative Catholic rhetoric he encounters in Schmitt's work. Years later, when asked by George Schwab what he thought of Strauss, Schmitt extolled his learning but also made the revealing observation: "Er versteckt sich hinter das Naturrecht allzuviel!" ("He hides all too much behind natural law!")[20] Significantly, he distinguished this stance from whatever he thought his young critic really believed. At that point Strauss did not feel compelled to speak out against the anti-modernist features of what presumably would be Schmitt's desired regime. In fact, he suggests it might be useful for Schmitt to develop more fully the concept of orders (*Ordnungsdenken*), a term then associated with both Catholic hierarchical and conservative Hegelian political theories.[21] In short, there is nothing in the written record of Strauss' relation to Schmitt to indicate his future role in founding a school whose adherents today have become global missionaries for American "liberal democracy". Whatever their differences in 1932, it is safe to say that Strauss shared the critical attitudes of his patron toward both social atomism and the belief in material progress. And he accepted those attitudes of Schmitt even while living in a far more traditionalist age and in a more deferential society than our own.

Another bridge between Schmitt and Strauss was their view of the importance

20. Conversation with George Schwab (Sept. 21, 1992). A similar skepticism about the usefulness of natural law concepts can be seen in Schmitt's postwar diary, *Glossarium. Aufzeichnungen der Jahre 1947-1951* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1991), p. 195.

21. See Joseph Kaiser, "Konkretes Ordnungsdenken" in *Complexio Oppositorum. Über Carl Schmitt* (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1988), pp. 319-31.

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of political life, a point on which light might be shed by looking at a recently published comparative study of Schmitt and Max Weber by G. L. Ulmen.[22] It is definitely possible to apply Ulmen's depiction of Schmitt to his protege Leo Strauss, particularly in the early thirties. Like Schmitt, Strauss belonged to a counter-current in European thought whose adherents were resisting the emphasis on social thought at the expense of political studies. Unlike administrative historians, Strauss and Schmitt refused to equate the study of government with the compilation of taxonomies and institutional chronologies. Both viewed the study of political institutions as one centering on foundations, extending back in time beyond the origins of the modern state. This comparison is not meant to hide the difference between Schmitt's political theory and Strauss' political philosophy, but it is possible to find links between Schmitt and Strauss despite their methodological differences. Neither one broke entirely with the liberal horizon that each found so objectionable in modern culture. While Schmitt worked to combine a communitarian ethic and a justification of authority with a naturalist anthropology, Strauss claimed to find both philosophical skepticism and covert irreligion outside the modern era, indeed in most of the premodern thinkers he chose to study. Did Plato share Socrates' doubts (if Socrates had them) about the existence of eternal forms?[23] Did both philosophers, as one might infer from Strauss, talk about divine justice and the retribution of evil to create politically useful or heuristic myths? Did Maimonides, on whom Strauss wrote a commentary, share his belief about the incompatibility between philosophical Reason and revealed religion? Is there also not something of a family resemblance between Strauss' distinction in terms of exoteric and esoteric teachings and Schmitt's less developed one pertaining to political theology and political theory? Both thinkers affirmed the need for public orthodoxies, but each pursued his own critical analysis of foundational beliefs.

A few words should be said about Meier's portrayal of Schmitt as a religious, more specifically Catholic fanatic. Though Schmitt was a (more or less) practicing Catholic who advised the interwar Catholic Center Party, his relation to the Church was far too ambivalent to justify any description of him as orthodox or obedient. For example, he broke with the Center's clerical leadership in opposing its decision to allow Hitler to become German chancellor. Despite Nazi electoral strength, he insisted, not all parties should have an "equal

22. G. L. Ulmen, *Politischer Mehrwert. Eine Studie über Max Weber and Carl Schmitt* (Weinheim: VCH, 1991), pp. 27-124.

23. The combination of hidden nihilism and social conservatism in Strauss's thought is a theme well developed in Stanley Rosen, *Hermeneutics as Politics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987). A similar point about Strauss's skeptically-grounded defense of tradition is found in Aryeh Botwinick's carefully reasoned case for a postmodernist epistemology, *Postmodernism and Democratic Theory* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993), pp. 90-118. See also the comments on Hannah Arendt's critical attitude toward the young Strauss in Elisabeth Jung-Bruehl's *Hannah Arendt: For Love of the World* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982), p. 98.

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chance" to form a government, including those which, like the Nazi Party, sought to overthrow the Weimar state.[24] Among the first to declare Schmitt to be a fascist and heterodox Catholic were such genuine members of the Catholic Right as Waldemar Gurian and Heinrich Muth.[25] It was the attacks leveled on Schmitt by his disenchanted Catholic followers which later provided the grist for the mills of his postwar left-of-center critics.

Even more importantly, it is hard to find in Schmitt any real evidence of his adherence to Catholic doctrine. In his writings of the early twenties, he defends the authority of the Catholic Church and argues that Catholics are more obedient subjects than Protestants. But, as Ulmen maintains, there is no intrinsic reason to equate this cultural judgment with orthodox religious beliefs.[26] By the 1950s there is compelling evidence to support this distinction. Schmitt's views about the legal development of the European state system, particularly as presented in his postwar magnum opus,[27] raises critical questions about the Catholic character of his thinking. His admiration for canon law is based on its kinship to Roman law, both of which Schmitt acclaims as monuments to human reasoning. He strongly rejects the power claimed by the Pope or other members of the Catholic hierarchy to interfere in the governance of European states. He treats the Reformation, without explicitly endorsing it, as a happy turning point in the direction of the European state system and of a nonconfessional international law. For a recognized *Catholic* scholar, Schmitt is also inexplicably insensitive to the disappearance of medieval Christendom as a clerically-dominated society. He celebrates that philosopher who had decried the politically intrusive Catholic Church as the "Kingdom of Darkness" and more than once refers to Hobbes, in a complimentary way, as "the completer of the Reformation."[28]

Schmitt was undoubtedly a broodingly religious man. But his religious meditations were deeply personal and abound with allusions to both the Protestant existentialist Kierkegaard and the *katechon*, the restrainer of the lawlessness initiating the Apocalypse. Schmitt looked repeatedly for apocalyptic significance in his own age and, particularly in his postwar writings, likened the breakdown of the European political and legal order to the advent of the *anomos*.[29] This

24. Carl Schmitt, *Legalität and Legitimität*, Second Edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1968), pp. 7-9 and 30-35; and "Legalität und gleiche Chance," in *Deutsches Volkstum* (July 1932), pp. 557-64.

25. See, e.g., Waldemar Gurian, *Deutsche Briefe*, Vol. 2 (Mainz: Grunewald, 1969).

26. See G. L. Ulmen, "Politsche Theologie und Politische Ökonomie. Über Carl Schmitt and Max Weber," *Complexio Oppositorum. Über Carl Schmitt*, pp. 341- 65.

27. Schmitt, *Der Nomos der Erde im Völkerrecht des Jus Publicum Europaeum*, Second Edition (Berlin: Duncker & Humblot, 1974), pp. 116-40 and 298-302.

28. Schmitt, "Die vollendete Reformation. Bemerkurgen und Hinweise zu neuen Leviathan-Interpretationen," in *Der Staat* (1965), p. 61.

29. Nicoletti, *Trascedenza e Potere*, *op. cit.*, pp. 482-94 and 540-543; and John Stroup's remarks on Schmitt's eschatological thinking in "Political Theology and Secularization Theory in Germany 1918-1939" in *Harvard Theological Review* 80 (July 1987) pp. 321-68.

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antichrist overthrower of moral restraints, prophesied in Thessalonians, assumed greater importance during his twilight years, which were marred by personal disgrace. Though Schmitt's chiliastic bent was not entirely attributable to his own misfortunes, hardship may well have contributed to it. Having lived long but not well, he stood by helpless as his detractors wrote what became the settled opinions about his thought. But neither his bitterness nor his retreat into eschatological speculation kept him from making reasoned judgments about legal and historical matters; nor did his mystical proclivities reveal the bigotedly Catholic side of his personality which Meier emphasizes (89-90). [30]

Paul Gottfried

30. Though Meier is correct that Schmitt's unkind comments about Jews in the *Glossarium* and earlier, during the Nazi years, invoke Christian solidarity, it is hard to perceive here any statements of denominational prejudice. There is no documented evidence of such prejudice in the pre-Nazi era, when Schmitt was closely identified with the Catholic Church. And though Schmitt blamed Jews unfairly for his postwar removal from German academic life, it remains to be shown that this was attributable to his Catholic upbringing. Schmitt's anti-Semitic remarks in the mid- and late 1930s were entirely opportunistic. Because Schmitt could never bring himself to embrace, even rhetorically, the Nazis' biological anti-Semitism, he fell back on essentially social attacks on Jewish manipulativeness and Hebraic materialism. Significantly, he never raised the medieval charge of Jewish deicide. See Bendersky's *Carl Schmitt*, *op. cit.*, pp. 197-202, and by the same author "Schmitt at Nuremburg," which contains parts of Schmitt's interrogations by the war crimes prosecutor Robert Kempner, in *Telos*, 72 (Spring 1987), pp. 91-129. Though Kempner, a German Jewish refugee, deplored Schmitt's lack of liberal democratic faith, he made clear that he found in him none of the beliefs he himself associated with Nazi ideology. Schmitt was detained and interrogated not for anti-Semitic statements but for allegedly creating a legal theory to justify Nazi German expansion.

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The Tribulations of Conservatism

Paul Gottfried, *The Conservative Movement*, rev. ed. (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1993) 214+xxiii pp.

Gottfried's revised edition of *The Conservative Movement* differs markedly from the book's first edition (1988), which he coauthored with Thomas Fleming. The two former collaborators remain friends, and in substantive agreement. The reasons they have not collaborated in this edition have to do with changes in the American political Right. According to Gottfried, the "postwar conservative movement analyzed in the first edition had largely disappeared by 1990." Indicative of this decline was the Rockford Institute's 1989 dismissal, with Fleming's full support, of Richard Neuhaus as director of its "Center on Religion and Society." Subsequently, Fleming, loath to invite censure for writing about matters to which he was too close, left Gottfried to update their earlier work.

Absent from Gottfried's revision is his earlier belief in the possibility of "an enduring conservative coalition" between the New Right, neoconservatives, and the paleoconservative heirs of the Old Right. Today, Gottfried regards such a tactical alliance, let alone a principled meeting of minds, as inconceivable: the conservative movement is dead because of the perfidy of some potential coalition partners and, most of all, because neoconservative ideology has become abhorrent to all genuine conservatives.

The New Right, typified by figures such as Richard Viguerie, Paul Weyrich, Howard Philips, and Jerry Falwell, occupies a curious position in Gottfried's discussion. Although he was originally somewhat sympathetic to this brand of conservatism, he now considers it a spent force which accomplished virtually nothing. Part of the reason for his misjudgment, Gottfried acknowledges, was underestimating the importance of the New Rightists' anti-intellectual bias, their aversion to "first-principle discussions." While many former New Rightists grew apolitical, many others, most prominently Paul Weyrich, became "supernumerary advocates" of neoconservative positions.

Only the neocons and the paleocons now vie for the conservative mantle. Neocons have as their most basic aims: 1) diminishing social inequality and 2) the "elimination of all national and ethnic barriers to economic growth." Jack Kemp has "proclaimed equality to be the key conservative principle." He and other neocons believe that enhanced equality is best attained through what they call "democratic capitalism," also known as "a welfare state economy with capitalist incentives." Friendly to both big business and Roosevelt's New Deal, neocons support the welfare state, ostensibly "without Jimmy Carter's

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additions," but with an open-ended commitment to governmental intervention to ameliorate social problems. (Gottfried's doubters should recall Reagan's expansion of the social "safety net"). Neocons champion the civil rights movement, but prefer Martin Luther King and a color-blind society to Jesse Jackson and quotas. Differing only provisionally from social democrats, neocons advocate free trade and liberal immigration laws. These measures, which neocons insist will prove domestically beneficial, accord with neocon foreign objectives, i.e., "democratic elections and . . . land reform, unionization, and capital formation," all to bring the "entire world . . . into conformity with the American regime that has developed in the 20th century." Neoconservatism is inseparable from what Gottfried calls "global democracy" or the obsession with aggressively democratizing foreign countries. Both overseas and at home, neocons want the US government to employ various means to "teach values," especially "democratic values."

Paleocons disagree. In the first place, they accept social inequality as natural, as both the condition and the consequence of liberty. The opposing view, paleocons assert, perversely treats government "as a levelling and homogenizing instrument." Careful to eschew radical individualism, paleocons esteem liberty as, in Clyde Wilson's words (which Gottfried quotes), "a by-product of membership in good standing of a free community." The vitality of such communities, with their historically derived parochialisms, paleocons value far above unrestrained economic growth. They also despise big government in general and the welfare state in particular. Their attitude, if not always their rhetoric, is that even "Social Security [is] a scam for breaking up intergenerational family ties" and that "tax deductions for day care amount . . . to a subsidy for mothers who neglect . . . their children." Paleocons disparage the civil rights movement, including Martin Luther King's contribution to it, as "fundamentally dangerous to local and corporate liberties." The same orientation lies behind paleocon opposition to unrestricted free trade and liberal immigration. The first threatens the cohesion of at least some American communities; the second, liberal immigration, particularly of non-Europeans, endangers America's future because "self-governing societies must have cultural limits." Paleocon foreign policy adheres to the principle of "America first." Moreover, since paleocons see political institutions as rooted in culture, they do not seek to democratize foreigners. The US government, paleocons aver, is not to be trusted to "teach values." Since this government's values are those of "mass democracy," i.e., those of the intrusive welfare state, paleocons favor having families and community schools teach traditional values.

Familiar — and some not-so-familiar — names appear in the ranks of both neocons and paleocons. Gottfried's book is a convenient guide to who's who. Prominent neocon public figures include Ronald Reagan, George Bush, Dan Quayle, Jack Kemp, Jeanne Kirkpatrick, and, so it seems, Ross Perot. Among influential neocon journalists and/or scholars are George Will, Ben Wattenberg, Michael Novak, Norman Podhoretz, Irving Kristol, Harry Jaffa, and Walter

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Berns. Important publications that support the neocon agenda are *The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post*, Podhoretz's *Commentary*, and Kristol's *Public Interest*. An array of well-funded institutes supports neocon publicists and provides a network in which they work and review one another's books. Among the many organizations to receive Gottfried's attention are the American Enterprise Institute, the Heritage Foundation, the Hudson Institute, and the Acton Institute for the Study of Religion and Liberty. The latter outfit is notable, observes Gottfried, for having flagrantly "blurred the distinctions between democratic capitalism and social democracy."

The only major public figure to systematically avow paleocon principles is Patrick Buchanan. In recent years, Richard Nixon has veered in the same direction. Prominent paleocon journalists and scholars include Joseph Sobran, Samuel T. Francis, Thomas Fleming, M. E. Bradford, Russell Kirk, Claes Ryn and E. Christian Kopff. Important publications in their camp are *Modern Age, Humanitas*, Fleming's *Chronicles*, and *Human Events*. Paleocons have far less institutional strength than neocons. Nevertheless, such organizations as the Rockford Institute, the John Randolph Club, the Independent Institute, and, with qualifications, the Ludwig von Mises Institute, all support paleocon causes.

Gottfried's most controversial foray — so controversial that most neocon periodicals have ignored his book — is his painstaking analysis of neocon funding and the outrageous behavior it makes possible. The four "recognizably neoconservative foundations" are the Bradley Foundation and those of the Sarah Scaife, Smith-Richardson and John M. Olin families. These "four sisters" fund the neocon network so generously that the budget of a single major neocon think tank, e.g., the Heritage Foundation or the American Enterprise Institute, exceeds the combined budgets of all Leftist thinktanks. The "four sisters," however, have betrayed their founding families' intentions to, e.g., oppose the New Deal and encourage an isolationist foreign policy. The benefactor families of the "four sisters" now leave monetary disbursements to the discretion of their philanthropic staffs. As a result, Old Right money supports neocon scholarship and propaganda utterly antithetical to Old Right conservatism. The far more ideologically compatible paleocons receive next to nothing. Gottfried wonders "how the small-dollar donors to Washington organizations would react if they knew how their money was actually spent to maintain 'a sumptuous life-style' for such manifestly un-conservative personages as Heritage's director Edwin Feulner (possibly 'America's most well-paid foundation director') and other privileged grantees."

Gottfried provides information on not just the credentials, but also the integrity, of the neocon foundations' beneficiaries. He makes and carefully documents some sensational accusations. For example, in the mid-1980s, Feulner seized control of the Aequus Institute from its founder, Alan Mansfield. Feulner's target was the wealth represented by the $11 million endowment with which Mansfield had established Aequus to defend the politically inexpedient principles of Christian Science and laissez-faire capitalism. Mansfield naively

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named Feulner and two of his associates to the institute's board of directors. Shortly thereafter, they proceeded to charge Mansfield with mental incompetence and took over his endowment, much of which they allocated to neocon groups. None of this was out of character for Feulner. "In the late 1970s," Gottfried writes, "he and Paul Weyrich organized the Council on National Policy, sometimes described as the barn where conservative cash cows go to be milked."

Two additional examples of neocon treachery will have to suffice here. Jerry Z. Muller, a historian close to Norman Podhoretz's *Commentary* and a professor at the Catholic University of America, prevented the university from honoring its appointment of a persistent critic of Podhoretz to its faculty. Muller's reward was a 1988 Olin Fellowship for $36,856. Then there is the sequence of faithless acts by Richard Neuhaus both before and after his 1989 separation from the Rockford Institute. One of Neuhaus' most egregious misdeed — and Gottfried describes several — was that, while he was still a Rockford employee, he sabotaged Rockford's promised $280,000 grant from the Bradley Foundation.

One cannot avoid noting the self-satisfied air with which Gottfried describes both the paleocons' aptitude for social criticism and their "iconoclastic exuberance." But such a sense of self-satisfaction afflicts political commentators of all stripes. The worst offenders are "the neoconservatives and the Left" who, Gottfried writes, "seek to keep closed, for instance, questions about the desirability of political and social equality, the functionality of human rights thinking, and the genetic basis of intelligence."

Controversial, even for paleocons, is Gottfried's enthusiasm for the recent rapprochement between paleocons and paleolibertarians. The problem lies not with the conservatism of paleolibertarians such as Murray Rothbard and Llewellyn Rockwell, but with libertarianism itself. As Gottfried admits, Rothbard and Rockwell, the main paleolibertarian advocates of an alliance with the paleocons, have come in for criticism from the doctrinaire libertarian Ed Crane for their, in Crane's words, "intolerant attitudes . . . in ethnic and cultural matters." In defense of libertarianism, however, Rothbard and Rockwell make a persuasive case for free trade which all paleocons, Gottfried included, would be advised to heed. Free trade redounds to the advantage of a restrictive US immigration policy. We either import the products made by, say, the Haitians in Haiti or the Haitians themselves. Gottfried's evident sympathy for paleocon protectionists blinds him to the benefits of free trade.

Despite the efforts of neocon periodicals to relegate Gottfried's book to oblivion, it merits a wide readership. It marks the end of the American postwar conservative movement.

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The Cunning of Capital

Moishe Postone, *Time, Labor, and Social Domination – A Reinterpretation of Marx's Critical Theory* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993), 424+xii pp.

Moishe Postone has opened up a new front in Critical Theory in which Marx figures as the unsurpassed analyst of modernity. Without the dryness typical of "back to basics," his reading of *Capital* reveals categories — commodity, labor, value, time — as captivating as any construed in this century. When bonded to the visions of post-capitalist life from the *Grundrisse*, the Marxian project suddenly appears more vibrant than the recent debates about precisely how to shelve the theory indicate.

Several audacious proposals run through Postone's plain, unjazzy prose: that Western critics of orthodox Marxism are equally orthodox at least in how they understand labor; that socialism would abolish the proletarian as well as the capitalist; that capitalism in some forms might abolish the capitalist class without transforming capitalist production; that domination by abstractions rather than class exploitation constitutes the core of capitalism; that capitalism as a global system pillared by trade blocs, liberal, Keynesian, and post-Keynesian strategies is increasingly vulnerable to crises, skepticism, and oppositional politics; that the two-dimensional or contradictory core of capital survives the eclipse of the free market.

Most cheeky of all is the claim that misreading capitalism is part of its spell. Theories of capitalism commonly exude the fetish they mean to expose. Postone's valuable remarks on Marx's method interspersed throughout the book indicate just how baffling is the task of "thinking about capitalism." Resolute radicals who resubscribe dutifully, shield students from their cynicism, or wonder about communication theory may wince at such quaint talk as "abolishing capitalism." Postone's book may not revive conviction, but it should place a pause on consigning to Marx one fateful error or other while we reconsider just how to think about capitalism in the midst of its present sea change. With economic policy embroiled in soul-searching worldwide, this is no time for wary Marxists to be out to the movies.

"Traditional Marxism" is the nexus into which nearly everyone — Frankfurt School or apparatchik — falls, and its central axis is the understanding of labor. Sound historical reasons can be given for why Critical Theory stalled in the thirties, why economic discussion receded, why the push into aesthetics, linguistics, sexuality, politics, and psychology failed to ignite much momentum.

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Postone focuses on the role of theory. "At the core of all forms of traditional Marxism is a transhistorical conception of labor" (7). For traditional Marxism, labor — shaping nature for some purpose, thereby constituting oneself — defines the species, a basic trait. How such labor emerges in slave, feudal, capitalist, and socialist societies remains in a fundamental way external to its meaning. Labor might be esteemed as the crux of human dignity, attacked as instrumental, or more recently classified in neutral ways as technical or "purposive." Some theorists migrate through several evaluations in a lifetime without questioning the axis itself. All such critiques, claims Postone, are affirmative in the sense that a historically specific practice is affirmed as generic, as a feature of any human landscape. So scant is its meaning that barely anything can be posited of "labor per se"; it serves as a foil whereby capitalism disguises its core and throws critique eventually into confusion. This inability to get straight about the "core" reflects less our crude handling of texts than the cunning of capital: a system of semblances where the abstract is most real and what seems "concrete" is the fiction.

While historical paths spiral from this axis of labor differently, a few are well-worn. Marxists traditionally contrast the mode with the relations of production — the factory with the capitalist — and highlight the injustice of expropriating the workers' surplus. The dilemmas of capitalism here reside in the sphere of circulation: how wealth is distributed, workers are exploited, social parasites grow fat. Class conflict drives history and a "good/bad" guys mentality prevails. Key terms for this wing of traditional Marxism are exploitation, class, distribution, surplus value, proletariat. The communal dimension of production supposedly is thwarted by the antagonistic structure of private ownership. This left-wing Ricardian approach resonates, according to Postone, with Marx's early essays in boring down to an essence that serves as the norm of critique. Labor here is the hidden ideal — the creative act — which socialism proudly unveils. Such theorizing had its finest hour in the context of liberal capitalism and labor movements; it loses steam, however, when socialist governments supersede the market without emancipating the masses. Difficulties abound as new sources of alienation, e.g., undemocratic institutions, are ferreted out. Meanwhile the proletariat ceases historically to signify for politics or the imagination "what is possible."

While more sophisticated, the cultural and political analyses of Western Marxism preserve flat notions of labor that possess no inner dynamism. The profiles — both thumbnail and extended — found throughout Postone's text are excellent, especially the treatments of Pollock, Horkheimer, and Habermas as well as Hilferding, Gross, Harvey, Cohen, Elster, and Sohn-Rethel. Postone returns to labor less catechetically than as an intriguing hypothesis central to Marxism's failure to track capitalism through its metamorphoses in a critical manner, i.e., as a social order that can be overcome.

Most paralyzing is Pollock's "primacy of the political," when state intervention seemed to remove the economic sphere from history by stabilizing as

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one-dimensional the welfare state. With no possibility of restructuring, production could be administered uneasily in democratic or authoritarian fashion until external political events, such as world peace, might wean it away from military dependency. In questioning Pollock's use of labor, Postone reconsiders the subsequent turn of Critical Theory to "the subjective": exploring the cultural "surface" while resigned to the petrified economic structures underneath. Traditional Marxism, in Postone's sense, eventually converts critique into moral judgment, if not exhortation. Depth grammar without a dialectic leaves domination as fate and emancipation as moral or aesthetic rebellion.

Habermas' alternative to the impasse sounded out by Pollock shares Kant's inspiration; reductionism is avoided by construing our original situation as multi-dimensional. As Kant distinguished technical from moral and prudential imperatives, so Habermas maps modern society in terms of lifeworld and system, symbolic interaction and instrumental action, critique and science. This strategy of demarcation immediately thaws the theory: movement, contradiction, crisis, praxis, even revolt are once again possible. While analysis flows again, the aerial view remains static. Interplay between the quasi-biological concept of labor and equally generic stages of interaction supplies the friction missing from the one-dimensional theories.

Demarcation allows for border disputes when system solutions barrel across lifeworld thresholds, when consensus is violated, the public excluded. But a stiff price is paid for invigorating theory through social partition: qualitative change concerning "labor" or "system" is ruled out and socialism amounts to capitalist production regulated in democratic ways. Clashes are external, values are contained, a territorial mentality prevails. Certainly, many contemporary conflicts do erupt in jurisdictional terms; the politics of repugnance and equity may foment major reforms of health care, for example. Postone faults Habermas for distorting Marx's notions of wealth and value by mistaking the appearance of modernity for its core. "The issue is not simply whether Habermas is 'fair' to Marx; it is a question of the adequacy of a critical social theory to its object" (231). Recruiting Weber to correct Marx yields phenomenologically "wider" categories that are dialectically shallow. Though the matter is left hanging, Postone suggests that at a secondary level, analyses such as Habermas' may be necessary. But divisions between technique, discourse, or expressiveness are best not grounded in human nature, evolution, or irreducible Kantian differences. The background for theorizing properly belongs to the social forms unfolding in grinding ways from labor as practiced in capitalism.

Modernity has been identified by any number of telltale traits; quoting Baudelaire, David Harvey recently typified the modern mentality as waves of destruction and creation. From Descartes to Pruitt-Igoe (St.Louis notorious public housing project eventually bombed by the same Federal government which originally built it) the more enlightened (or artistic) solution first negates what is given and erects new structures after the rubble is cleared. Postmodernism, by contrast, reconsiders the rubble. Marx, in Postone's reading, depicts the pervasive modern

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motif as continual transformation that somehow remains the same. Modernity joins, in paradoxical ways, flux to the timeless. Change continually occurs, nothing holds still for long, but did anything really move or was change somehow fixed in place? Both questions are answered "yes," and "treadmill" best defines this motion of continual effort just to stay in place without any goal directing the process. But treadmill is more than an evocative metaphor for frantic consumption; it describes the actual imperative imposed by labor under capitalism to create surplus value.

The other distinguishing marks of modernity arise from this compression/expansion exerted by labor — notably the ever present dualisms between the universal and particular, weary subjects of recent attacks. Postone notes how capitalism fosters an extraordinary degree of personal autonomy — choices aplenty about my affairs — in the context of objective dependence on social relations so invisible they pass unremarked — the big story that never makes the news. Philosophers observe how the vocabulary of sensible qualities — color, sounds, smells — exceeds the language available for describing underlying primary qualities, such as matter. The semblance is much more familiar than the real. With capitalism, in a similar way, the resources that pour into thinking about the personal deplete what little energy remains for reflecting on the abstractions that dominate our lives. It is enough to survive speedups and layoffs, let alone fathom their causes. For an effective tyranny which requires no overt enforcement J. S. Mill blamed the intolerant, suspicious masses. In the name of "the people" a code of values, thought, and conduct holds sway over individuals who may continue to feel free. For Marx, the abstractions — simultaneously so real and elusive — are imposed by labor that exists as the social mediation. More potent than the disgusted majority is the treadmill of value, which coordinates existence under capitalism.

If the naturalism of traditional Marxism skews analysis, how then are labor, and by extension value and time, to be understood? The chapters exploring the double character of the core categories are demanding; Postone's open style eases somewhat the difficulty in grasping a dialectic that endeavors to remain hidden. Labor under capitalism is originally both concrete — a skill that produces useful products — and abstract — the source of value measured as abstract labor time. Use value and exchange value arise together in capitalist production as both split apart and mutually determining; labor creates material goods and commodities that exist as value. From their joint inception in labor, the material and abstract polarities are in uneasy tension. Impressive material wealth doesn't always signify great quantities of value: warehouses of grain may have little worth depending on the conditions of their production. But the use-value side of the ledger isn't a tag along to the forward drive of capital to increase. Wasted resources outline possibilities we cannot access in the present.

As Hegel observed, little of worth can be said about method issues prior to actually thinking. Philosophy — like swimming — is best learned from inside the activity, not from preambles. Likewise with Marx, the simplest categories

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already offer clues to thinking about capitalism. For example, it is tempting to construe the commodity as "having exchange value," as if what defines capitalism arises from equal exchange in the market. So prior to distribution labor would exist as physical exertion embodied in the commodity or material object. The social markings of capitalism thus are erased from the production process and labor is "dehistoricized." Initially it is awkward to describe the commodity *as value*, as a thing that also instances the abstraction of "socially necessary labor time." For ordinary purposes, time measures activities, not physical objects. But like physics, the categories of *Capital*, Vol. 1, move below the surface to reconstruct processes never experienced directly. Even a single product cannot be understood solely in terms of raw materials, skill, needs, market, price without recourse to the "qualitatively homogeneous, general social mediation constituting a social totality" (152). My labor and my product are more than particular entities; their meaning derives from a peculiar stuff that relates everything to "everything else all at once." In other words, they exist as value.

Failing to get straight about the double character of labor, observes Postone, how division into abstract and concrete runs through all categories of capitalism, is the fundamental error in reading Marx. Material wealth often is taken for value, for example, by those who claim that scientific knowledge or technology as distinct from direct human labor creates value. For anyone flummoxed by the sections on the machine in the *Grundrisse*, Postone's discussion is greatly illuminating. While scientific knowledge and advanced technology can produce material wealth with little need for human labor, value — not material wealth — is the objective of capitalism. Producing so as to squeeze increments of value from labor is the goal; that such pursuit in fact swells our storehouses is no social goal.

The categories of *Capital* are not narrowly economic, as if production occupied one layer of the social cake. Postone uses "social form" to describe how the imperative arising from production creates abstractions that pervade society. As capitalism comes of age, labor, value, abstract time, and the commodity function as "social forms," as primary determinants of family, politics, art, law, morality, etc. "Social form" describes what we have to comply with; it establishes "just the way things are." Social mediation in non-capitalist societies is overt and designated: traditions or groups assigned responsibility in noticeable ways might be challenged on occasion. With capitalism, social mediation vanishes into the self-evident, close kin to nature, reason, and objectivity. This structuring proceeds automatically through abstractions that cut deeper than institutional differences. Only capitalism can be grasped in terms of social *forms* that radiate from core to surface. Earlier economies embedded in social relations contrast with the modern situation where production embeds the rest. This penetration of abstractions into social being is the primary measure of domination in capitalism.

So synonymous with modernity are these social forms that Postone a bit slyly suggests that production is not a privileged sphere. Not privileged, perhaps, as

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in hobnail materialism, but historically industrial production made possible societies that exist as totalities defined by abstractions. That capitalism initially emerged in Europe was a contingent matter. As capitalism takes root, the ideas of historical necessity, system, and trajectory become valid. Postone does not employ "social form" anachronistically. Rather, it signals Marx's innovation, a theorizing that streams across venerable dualisms between subject/object, social/natural, or recent dualisms between agent/structure, knowledge/action. The economic process of increasing relative surplus value known as "real subsumption" describes this encroachment of the capital form. Presenting Marx as a theorist of social forms additionally frames the issues between Weber and Marx more precisely.

Closest in ancestry to "social form" is Hegel's use of logic. For Hegel, consciousness repeatedly trips up when inept concepts structure new experiences, provoking repeated failures. "Logic" describes how abstractions such as "being," "substance," or "force" shape experience from behind. According to Postone, Marx learned much about capitalism from reading Hegel's *Science of Logic*. While the *Philosophy of Right* supports a "demarcation" or institutional approach to social theory, logic emphasizes the *whole* as its context. Twisted out of Hegel's metaphysics is the inkling of Marx's critique of capitalism where abstractions envelope every turn, the marrow regenerating social life. The "subject" searching for completeness is actually value produced by alienated labor. The "totality" arising from this search exemplifies encompassing domination. Hegel's genius lay in recognizing how metaphysical concepts impose real necessity on experience. He erred in projecting this regimentation onto all history. While metaphysics languishes in the modern era, for Marx, its relevance, properly gauged, has never been greater. "We have seen that the social relations mediated by labor are self-grounding, have an essence and appear not to be social at all but objective and transhistorical. They appear, in other words, to be ontological . . . but what seems to be ontological is actually specific to capitalism" (167). "Capitalism is a form of social life with metaphysical attributes — those of the absolute Subject" (156). The skepticism about metaphysics linking Hume and Kant to postmodernism, while desirable, is precipitous. To dismiss as a fiction the notion of totality is to sacrifice a real fiction for an imaginary freedom. Emancipating "texts" and "social contexts" must occur somehow together.

If totality and metaphysics are, in a sense, indigenous to capitalism, how does Postone avoid the frozen conclusions of earlier theorists? What *is* his answer to Pollock? Suppose that "labor" has been widely misinterpreted. Why should so much pivot on such obscure categories that Postone concedes do not matter much for everyday perception? The social forms that slice through society from surface to depth seem as immobilizing as the "totally administered society." Postone's short answer is simply that history has "practically refuted" this pessimism: capitalism continues to develop in careening ways more damaging than "steering crises." Integrated at the global level with

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fewer "others" to plunder or despise, capitalism may loom increasingly as the Other which it has been all along. In short, presently self-evident practices may lose their protective coloring and emerge as matter for debate. That capitalism evidently evolves does not, however, set theory in motion. How are such events understood?

Postone's longer answer comes in the speculative, difficult chapters on time and value where the relentless treadmill takes hold. The double character, the trademark of modernity, is apparently already in the labor and commodity forms. "This opposition between abstract universality and particularistic specificity is not decontextualized, but a historically constituted opposition, rooted in the determinate social forms of capitalism" (163). Ordinarily, the dualisms involve vocal universality and mute concreteness, but these assignments can be reversed. The double character is also concealed by the fetish process: how the essence splits off and appears as what it is not. Labor seems like mere physical energy faced with its product and wages; the commodity appears as physical object confronted by money; money appears "simply as means of circulation" — a useful convention without connection to anything larger. The "natural" in every case confronts the "social" as something else again. The fetish or "splitting" wards off exposure by veiling the double character — how labor is at once both concrete and abstract. While we can see through the fetish, we cannot eliminate it without eliminating the double character of value-producing labor. Whether in political ideals, moral doctrines, or the workplace, these divisions reflect the real compulsion of a way of life. While people can "think about dualism" differently, they cannot really think apart from dualism yet.

Recognizing the double character of labor does not erase Pollock's quandary. Capitalism might be two-dimensional without being contradictory. If use value and exchange value sat in the core, an unbudging standoff, there would be no motion. The treadmill effect first appears in the value form, but what drives it comes in the transition from simple commodity exchange that defines consumption, C-M-C, to production for surplus value, M-C-M'. The former process stops whenever needs are satisfied; the latter, which accumulates money — a means turned goal — is endless. Properly stated, the capital form extends indefinitely: M-C-M'-C-M"-C-M"'. . . capital which does not grow eventually ceases to be. This explains its striking difference from material wealth which can be quantified in ordinary ways and does not exist as abstraction, but as car, house, field. The value form exposes the unceasing drive implicit in the commodity and labor — "a directional movement without external telos." Treadmills lack goals; this compulsion is "blind, processual, and quasi-organic" (270). At the core of capitalism is no liberating labor held captive but bottomless insistence on increase.

Endless motion, what Hegel calls the spurious infinite, does not entail collision. The metaphor of "treadmill" has limits Postone corrects with the elusive notion of "shearing pressure." Showing how the core grinds and tears within involves the analysis of time, the most creative edge of Postone's interpretation.

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Marxists commonly refer to "contradiction" and the meanings vary. Some use a quasi-Hegelian sense as if nesting within opposed forces was synthesis, the next social form ready to hatch. Recovering "contradiction" from traditional Marxism is a delicate matter. Value is "self-moving" but not "self-overcoming," at least in any automatic sense. Its movement continually transforms society — more wealth is created — without, however, adjusting its basic requirement: that direct human labor serve as the measure of wealth. This central contradiction is rooted in Postone's understanding of labor: "I shall argue that the mode of production in capitalism should be understood not in terms of technical 'forces of production' separate from social 'relations of production' but in terms of the contradiction between value and material wealth, i.e., as a materialized expression of both dimensions of labor in capitalism and hence of both the forces and relations of production" (199). What is necessary under capitalism creates possibilities which cannot be realized under capitalism. As these possibilities become visible or "real," entrenched necessities appear incongruous. "Overcoming capitalism" has more to do with its obsolesence than with revolution. "The expenditure of direct human labor time no longer stands in any meaningful relationship to the production of such wealth . . . the great mass of material wealth does not mean that a greater amount of value has been created . . . increased productivity does not yield greater amounts of value per unit of time" (197).

Capitalism transforms society fundamentally because of the need to transform production in order to squeeze out value. To maintain a surplus measured only in labor time eventually requires the energies of science, technology, government investment, and consumer appetite. This sophisticated know-how records the species' endeavor and dwarfs the increasingly "hollow" role played by individual labor. "The dynamic reconstitution of the necessity of value-producing labor (wage labor) is such that it implies the transformation of the concrete nature of that labor...to render that labor more uniform and simple and to intensify its expenditure...the development of tremendous social powers in a form that is alien to the workers and controls them, and the related long-term tendency for proletarian labor to become one-sided and empty" (347). As comforts mount, most jobs keep getting dumber. Each advance in methods gives some producers a momentary edge while others catch up. "Treadmill" conveys this hurry; it also suggests the gasping for advantage on the next go-round. On the one hand, the "stuff" and "knowledge" side of the ledger expands. On the other, products and labor cheapen while margins of superiority grow harder to establish. The pressure between use-value and exchange-value, the abstract and the concrete, increases as capitalism evolves. Does this pressure imply that strategies for squeezing out surplus while maintaining direct human labor are dwindling? Such limits would not reflect external scarcities, e.g., natural resources, but would arise from the "conundrum at the core."

Postone develops the central contradiction of capitalism most precisely in terms of time. Earlier he had discussed the history of time: which factors

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spurred the shift from concrete to abstract time that is "uniform, continuous, homogenous, commensurable, interchangeable, empty" (202). Concrete time, a dependent variable, varies with the occasions of life. Sacred time differs from harvest, war, childbirth, meals, night, hunting, both in terms of duration and quality. A social upheaval (quiet only in retrospect) was required to shake time loose of these entanglements until it stood as an independent, prior framework that determines activities. Nowadays, experience occurs "in time" — a homogenous accounting that makes no concessions to special events. Devices able to measure constant temporal units existed for centuries as curiosities before the commercial motivation mounted for time discipline. Neither monks nor emperors but Flemish cloth makers recognized the power in how bells enforced the workday and hustled workers along.

The double character of time in capitalism is not between traditional duration and abstract, mathematical clockwork. In its advanced stages capitalism operates inside categories on both the use and exchange value sides. Nature, household, leisure, proletariat, art, instincts, subcultures are not spared. Technology and science (though concrete achievements of the species) are shaped by the double-character. The possibilities for abolishing capitalism do not entail championing one side of the dualism but seeing through these antitheses to another social mediation.

The double character of time arises from the ongoing transformation and reconstitution of production needed to eke out a surplus. Whatever value accrues from the usual industrial methods fills the social labor hour as a constant: average abstract labor time does not vary. State of the art production permits some to earn more until their innovations are disseminated, but the fundamental meaning of abstract time is the unchanging social labor hour. Reconstituting the base level of productivity constantly reproduces capitalism. Thus disparity exists between quantities of material wealth and value — the real "wealth" of capitalism — which is measured in abstract labor time. This continual redefining of the present is a global process driven by abstract forces. Dimness regarding history reflects less a failed education than a social reality. Persons properly trained under capitalism dispense with yesterday as if it never existed. The past exists in a perpetual present tense.

But abstract time alone does not characterize society. Capitalism is driven by two imperatives: to increase production and to accumulate surplus value. The latter is measured abstractly. The former makes capitalist societies a study in changing landscapes through regular upheavals of production. Postone calls this accumulation of past experience and labor "historical time." "Historical time is a form of concrete time that is socially constituted and expresses an ongoing qualitative transformation of work and production, of social life . . . forms of consciousness, values, and needs. Unlike the 'flow' of abstract time, this movement of time is not equable, but changes and can even accelerate" (294). With abstract time stuck in the present, historical time moves: polio prevented, air bags installed, digital transmission adopted at certain dates. Historical time

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is the blur of change that alienates one generation from the next. Historical time feels like runaway speed; abstract time adds: "going nowhere." Historical time gives modernity its restlessness; abstract time imposes a dead calm. Modernity runs along two axes: historical time pushing the abstract present along as its invisible driver. "The historical 'content' of the abstract temporal unit remains as hidden as the social 'content' of the commodity" (295).

It was easier to pin your hopes on proletarian revolt than the shearing pressure exerted by these forms of time. The core of capitalism is difficult to imagine. Possibilities are not shimmering in some Heideggerian dawn; the nonidentity of this totality resembles an agitated force field, a source of sparks, not illumination. Contradiction builds up like friction along these axes. Postone describes an incongruity between vast material resources and paltry living labor. The necessity for society to mediate itself through labor becomes progressively archaic . . . an irritant, a drag, a non-necessity. "A growing gap emerges between the socially general productive capacities that are constituted as capital and the value basis of the totality . . . an increasingly antagonistic opposition between the objectified totality and individuals: the former becomes increasingly rich and powerful, while much individual labor and activity becomes emptier and powerless" (359).

Postone never mentions revolution. No revolution parallels how capitalism as a global system could undergo structural transformation. Neither storming the Bastille nor constitutional congress has the scope, but some types of sustained social movements will no doubt be vehicles for debate. These questions will not be asked: why must value — average socially necessary labor time — establish the norm under which society organizes itself? Or why crumble before economic dictates? Why not settle matters through political means? But someone might inquire: why do social problems worsen, given our resources? Why should people die when treatment is available? Why must everyone slave for such long hours? Should not technology and science serve the community directly? Why is life so hard given our wealth and know-how? No question forces a rethinking of capitalism, but the possibility is there.

Immanent critique, in Postone's view, remains negative in tracking social forms from the abstract core to the concrete surface. An affirmative critique contrasts the given situation with some essence, whether proletariat, polis, equality . . . Traditional Marxism — in its motley variety — is affirmative and moral, e.g., Habermas contrasting the progressive and pathological features of modernity. Negative critique looks to the future, to possibilities which are shadowy forms within the present. Negative critique emphasizes rupture from the given. The crevices of tradition that some cling to offer little support in this process — though they clearly serve as personal reprieve. Domination is not something that happens to the modern world; modernity in its deepest sense constitutes a domination devilishly difficult to grasp.

Postone says little about how internal opposition to capitalism might occur. How are imperatives contested from within and not from the standpoint of

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what's already existing, what used to be, or a liftoff into the ideal? With capitalism achieving a quasi-natural status, one is tempted to wonder: why bother with critique when reality is so resilient? Do Marxists mistake for a social goal the kind of freedom only approachable in art, religion, or philosophy? Or else, since capitalism is more intriguing than the alternatives, critique loses direction in aesthetic ways. Why abolish a system that engenders dialectics — one of the best forms of freedom we have? A rational society, by contrast, might sound boring. This aesthetic turn is more likely as theorists backpeddle from class conflict with its clearer implications for praxis.

Depicting capitalism as perishable does not mean that any big events are on the calendar; rather it serves in part to correct method. How can we characterize domination that runs all the way down without yielding a closed system or structuralism *à la* Foucault? How are the constraints peculiar to capitalism the source of its vulnerability? Though "overcoming capitalism" is not imminent, neither is it in some other world. Postone's reading also suggests an approach to praxis. While negative critique involves following capitalism in its unfolding, evaluation cannot be suspended indefinitely. Practical judgment, however, does not involve stepping back from the situation. A Marxian judgment is closer to an act of recognition of what in a sense is nearby. The utopian moment crisscrosses the differences enforced by capitalism. Why *must* the universal disregard particularity, e.g., social policies that cannot respond to individual circumstances? As long as any dichotomy is not equated with good/bad, as long as constraints become visible, resolutions are not idealized, as long as critique runs far ahead of praxis for now — opposition is possible. Such praxis does not encourage righteousness. One might be disheartened by how most reforms allow capitalism to consolidate its hold, e.g., fuller participation of women in public life. Postone would remind us that this consolidation is a complicated process that creates possibilities even as it closes them off.

Postone hesitates in describing the social individual of socialism. After all, what does not exist is not very clear. Rather than tripping over superlatives — like Aristotelians who take on "human flourishing" — he says little. One point, however, is hammered home. Socialism replaces the logic of capitalism only by "overcoming the concrete labor done by the proletariat" (28). Degraded in industrial production and source of surplus value, labor (whether despised or idealized) is the crux of domination. Do not preach shoulder to shoulder on the assembly line. Do not imagine days and nights in cafes with poets and painters. No society can do without dirty work. Production directed at material wealth and not surplus value preserves a minimum of such work. When metaphysics is overcome in fact, not simply in argument, there are no remaining essences. Only labor which does not define one's self can help to liberate oneself.

Lately, the urge to break out of the academic mold has resulted in poetic and personal styles that sometimes verge on entertainment. Postone's text, by contrast, recalls a mode of social science that is rare in the era of career scholarship. He is not after novelty, constructing arguments, unburdening himself,

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or being faithful to Marx. "What is at issue is the question of the nature of capitalism" (397). This effort to figure out modernity (with few explicit references to history) is palpable even in the most abstract categories. The book does not read like a defense; the scientific determination to test the viability of the theory is evident. Postone has achieved the density of a primary source; especially Chapter Eight, "The Dialectic of Labor and Time," suggests more leads than the author can pursue. If the book succeeds in reformulating Critical Theory, the clues lie there. Some might wonder how founding critique on labor and production can make such a difference. Postone develops a method for comprehending the core of capitalism with a myriad of implications for other studies. The categories developed here constitute the background for further research — what sense of the whole informs a particular analysis? Though social movements — not social forms — have the agency to abolish capitalism, how they thematize domination is crucial. Postone's optimism is rooted to great degree in capitalism, both its core and its culture. While this book has a larger audience than Fermat's Last Theorem, determining how such abstract discussion connects with actual struggles and debates will be grueling.

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